

ST. PAUL

FROM
THE

TRENCHES

SAINT PAUL FROM THE TRENCHES

A RENDERING OF THE EPISTLES
TO THE
CORINTHIANS AND EPHESIANS
DONE IN FRANCE DURING
THE GREAT WAR

BY

GERALD WARRE CORNISH

With a Foreword by

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Spirit To Spirit Publications

Tulsa Christian Center

1981

FOREWORD

IT IS uncertain whether the author intended this translation to be published, or whether he would have wished to revise it. Doubt on both these points prevented the relatives of Gerald Warre Cornish from publishing it when the manuscript first came into their hands.

He was killed in action on September 16, 1916. Today, more than twenty years later, the translation still seems to give forth its racy freshness from the old mud-stained copybook in which it was written in the trenches. Its abrupt ending is sufficient evidence that the task upon which the author embarked was never completed. Those who read it then, however, on re-reading it after this long interval, have felt the obligation to offer this work to the public, in the belief that its inherent value has stood the test of time and will continue to do so.

I have been asked to write the Foreword, not on account of any scholastic proficiency on my part, or distinction in the world of letters, but because I am probably the only person with whom Gerald discussed his project of re-translating the New Testament. I know the spirit in which he was prepared to undertake it.

When the war broke out, Gerald Warre Cornish was lecturer in Greek at Manchester University. He had qualified for this position by a Double First in the Classical Tripos at Cambridge. A son of the Vice-Provost of Eton, himself a distinguished classical

scholar, he seemed marked out for a scholastic career. His translation of the *Alcestis* of Euripides has been performed several times, and, when at Manchester University he helped to produce the *Choephoroë* of Aeschylus, Professor Conway in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* spoke of this production as 'perhaps the most noteworthy of all revivals of Greek tragedy.' Such were his qualifications for the task that he later undertook.

It was during one of his periods of leave from the front that he first discussed with me the possibility of a new translation of the Greek Testament. During the long weary hours of waiting in the trenches, he set to work on a translation of the Epistle to the Colossians, which he forwarded to me later with a request for my opinion on it. On reading his translation and comparing it with the Authorised Version and the original text, I soon saw that, while here and there his translation approached a little nearer to the Greek, it had not anything original to recommend it. When he was next home on leave I told him so, and he surprised me by replying that he felt just the same about it.

We never discussed any alternative method of translation, and it was not until after he had been killed, while gallantly leading his company — well ahead of it — in the Somersets' successful attack on the 'grid' at Wunderwerk, that the muddy copybook containing in minute but perfectly legible script these new translations of the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians and part of the Epistle to the Ephesians came into my hands. For reasons that I have hinted at above, this manuscript has passed through numerous hands, but was never submitted to a publisher for

publication. Various opinions have been expressed in regard to it. The most striking deserves reproduction exactly as it was written on half a sheet of notepaper. It reads as follows:

Original outlook — clear presentment — Aristotelian style — breathless — eager — elliptic. Modern students will find little dogma, but refraction through the eyes of one who had seen Christ in the spirit of the new Gospel, and (especially) many expressions of carefully individual opinion — not commands but advice.

No careful Platonic dialectic, nor gradual unfolding of argument which demands an interlocutor's assent. The conclusion is working itself out in the writer's mind, and we have often to look to the end of an argument or chapter to find the 'text.' This is epistolary, not the style of a treatise or a dialectic exercise.

This was the criticism of a scholar. But this little book is not published on the ground of its appeal to scholars, but for the sake of the vigour and freshness of its interpretation of the three Epistles. It may be read by everyone who takes delight in the greatness of the Apostle Paul, and perhaps especially by those who have found him difficult as a letter-writer, and full of things 'hard to be understood.' Cornish's idea seems to have been that granted a knowledge of Greek and a certain spiritual understanding of the character and the message of the Apostle — which he had himself in a marked degree — this message could be transmitted as the Apostle intended it to be. Freed from the trammels of literal rendering, such a translator might produce very interesting results. It is true that this method implies a certain amount of latitude in interpretation.

As an example chosen at random, take the first verse of the sixth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians:

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? (Authorised Version.)

Cornish's rendering reads as follows:

Now another matter — the Greeks are devoted to litigation, it is a passion with them, but what has that to do with you? Are you going to haunt the law courts of Corinth and with cases which you bring against one another!

At once a mental picture rises of a problem that confronted Saint Paul, and of which those to whom his letter was addressed must have been well aware. The reader today cannot realise such things without considerable study and research; while the rendering before us, without in any way tampering with the message of the Apostle, sketches in for him the scene which was before the Apostle's mind as he wrote. Admittedly this might be a dangerous method where scholarship was lacking, or effort was directed towards only giving a modern character to the Epistle. But no one who knew the seriousness and thoroughness of Gerald Warre Cornish would ever accuse him of that. That he himself was capable of condensing a message of profound import and great spiritual insight into a few sentences is shown in a passage which was written on the last page of the copybook and stands alone — Gerald's own discovery on the subject of rumour and fear. It reads as follows:

There are many rumours, which give birth to fear,

and many of these are false, and when men learn that they are false, they breathe again and forget their fear. But some they think perchance are true, and in these cases the fear remains. But I have learnt that in every case where fear-producing rumours have arisen, the rumour was produced by fear, and was not true, and that all so-called facts, or news, no matter what they may be, or on what authority promulgated, in so far as they are fear-begetting or fear-begotten, are false, without foundation, and will be found in the issue and upshot of events to be wholly without reality, or just grounds for existence. But this, no one has the right to say except in the Christ, in the understanding of the one Mind which dissipates all contrary to itself, and recreates the world.

No one after reading this will be disposed to doubt the amount of thought and care that went to this very original rendering of the three Epistles. Read with an open mind, it will leave the reader cheered and informed, strengthened and refreshed.

J. S. B.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THAT another edition of this translation should be called for within one month of its publication affords gratifying proof that those responsible for its appearance in book form had not overestimated the extent of its appeal. The response has been immediate, and a great many letters have been received. Not one of these has had a disparaging word to say about the book, and there is striking unanimity as to its helpfulness. Gratitude has been expressed, both for the extent to which the Apostle's character and message are made to live in this present hour, and also for the actual spiritual illumination experienced by the reader. This result must, in my opinion, be in large measure due to the complete absence of self-consciousness attaching to Cornish's work. He certainly had no thought of trying to do the clever thing. Whatever he may have had in view he was absorbed in his task and by it. 'No one was ever less of a prig than Gerald Cornish,' to quote the *Eton College Chronicle*. 'Those who knew him best can tell of the serenity of his faith in the triumph of good.' Perhaps that is the explanation of the success that has attended the publication of this fragment of his work, which now seems destined to find an ever-widening circle of readers.

J. S. B.

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FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I

1. I, PAUL, was divinely chosen to be the Apostle of Jesus Christ. In my calling the will of God was made manifest, and in this high office and ap- *The divine*
pointment I now address you who are in *calling*
Corinth, and with me Sosthenes, brother in the faith. We speak to you who have also been sharers in this divine calling, whose lives have been enlarged and purified in Christ Jesus, who have received the holiness that comes from faith — and with you in this appeal I associate all who, in whatever place they may be, wherever we may be, do together with us invoke his name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. May grace come to you, may peace abide with you from God, who is the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of the grace that has come to you I feel incessant gratitude to God. You have found the riches of the Christ; the word and the knowledge of God are spoken and fulfilled in your midst; the witness of the Christ is there; it is unassailable evidence; and the full measure of His gifts is counted in you, nothing is wanting for your completion, whilst you wait for that unveiling and revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, there will be no faltering, no failure in his support of you, till you are made perfect, in the 'end,' 'the day' of our Lord Jesus Christ, the day of perfect revelation. For God, through whom this calling, this

share in His son Jesus Christ our Lord has come to you, is faithful in all His ways.

10. THROUGH this name of Jesus Christ our Lord, I urge you — for that is the secret of his name — to

*No room
for dis-
unity in
Christ* have one mind, one persuasion and precept amongst you, to be all of one mind with one idea. O let schisms and divisions be unknown to you, for your perfection is in unity.

Strifes there are amongst you, it has come to my knowledge through the members who meet in Chloe's house. They tell me some describe themselves as disciples of Paul, others of Apollos, others of Cephas, others of Christ — but Christ is not divided. I was not crucified for you, nor were you baptised into my name. For this very reason I was careful not to baptise disciples personally amongst you. It is to me a cause of gratitude to God that I baptised only Crispus and Gaius, and also the household of Stephanas — not another soul, I think, did I baptise, and purposely, that it might not seem that I was making disciples. Christ Jesus sent me not to baptise, but to make known the word of joy, not intellectually, not with the persuasive brilliance of personality and personal influence, lest the cross of the Christ should be obliterated and ruled out.

18. CLEVERNESS, human wisdom, intellectual strength do not accomplish the mighty works of the

*The
foolishness
of worldly
knowledge* Gospel. Ours is the word of the cross; it saves us; there is in it the power of God; but to those who are in the power of death and subject to its ever-increasing dominion, this word appears as folly, as an impertinence. And so the

word of the Bible comes true: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, I will make nothing of the intelligence of those who profess to know.' Where is the wise, the scribe, the learned investigator of material things? God makes the wisdom of the world foolishness, forasmuch as it was in that wisdom that the world lost the knowledge of God, it was by reason of that that its eyes were closed, and lo! the wisdom of God now appearing is proclaimed as a thing foolish in the sight of that old wisdom; but the preaching of this heavenly word saves, it saves all who have faith in it, who accept it spiritually. It does not commend itself to the old thought. The Jews demand miracles and signs, the Greeks ask first and last for wisdom, but it is the crucified Christ that we preach, and that appears a fool's message to the Greeks, and a scandal to the Jews. Think of it! God's power, God's wisdom, the Christ, takes on that semblance in the sight of men. But there is more wisdom in God's foolishness than in men's cleverness, more strength in God's weakness than in human power. Not many wise, powerful, highly placed are found in our number. Why? Because this calling of God is not on the lines of anything which the world sets up as important. God would not have anything of the flesh to plume itself on a value of its own. Thus it was that He chose that which was weak, despised, unsupported by birth and tradition, that which in the eyes of the world had no existence at all. This He chose and by its means He dismantles all the world's glory, leaving us faith alone. For in Christ Jesus your being comes from him, not from the world, and he is your wisdom, your righteousness, your cleansing and your redemption coming to you from

God alone, from Him apart from all else, in order that as Jeremiah says, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.' By that saying the prophet referred to the distinction between the talents and qualities that are believed to belong to the flesh and the personal self, and the grace and power that flow from the Spirit only.

II

I. SO I NEVER thought in coming amongst you to be able by my own persuasiveness, logic or rhetoric to make a message of God, a revelation of the *The new wisdom* mystery of His being, understood by you. It could never have come to you through such human means as that. And so I judged that to know nought but Jesus Christ and him crucified was the way, the only way of this Gospel, which is demonstrated divinely by the Spirit and by power, not by persuasive preaching. I was as nothing in myself, only conscious of my weakness, and full of deep reverence and fear, yes, even of what I had to say, which could not express itself in clever words; and so your faith was built not on any man's personal influence and wisdom, but on divine power and its demonstration. Yet it *is* a wisdom that I speak, a deep and holy wisdom known to the perfect, unknown to the passing world of the flesh, and unknown to the powers that control that world, powers and influences which even now, are breaking up and vanishing. This wisdom of God is spoken by me in a mystery. Unknown to the former generations of the world, it was to be our glory, our light, and God's fore-ordination of it preceded all other things. Unknown too to all powers of the mortal state, for

they crucified its Lord. Had they known this hidden delectable wisdom, would they have crucified him? They knew it not, 'for *eye*,' says the scripture, 'hath not seen it, *ear* hath not heard it, the heart of mankind has not received the things that God makes ready for those that love Him.'

10. SO IT WAS through the Spirit, through revelation that we learned them. The very depths of God are searched by the Spirit, which also sheds light on *all* things; and the Spirit alone can know and reveal them, nought else; no more than one can tell any man's thoughts that he thinks in himself [none can tell them save the thinker himself], so none knoweth God's thoughts, but God Himself, the Spirit. And in our hearts and minds there now doth work not that spirit, which is the influence and animal intelligence of the world, but the divine Spirit, and this it is which reveals to us those things that are bestowed on man by God. It is that legacy which passes from God to man, those messages and bestowals which man receives from God which I teach you of, and how can I make it known by an utterance invented in the schools of learning, how can I teach it except as the Spirit teaches it, representing spiritual things in a spiritual method, to be spiritually discerned? Only thus can it be taught, for the materially minded man, who thinks through the senses, is totally and utterly ignorant of God's spiritual messages. They are to him absolute foolishness, and he cannot reach them, for they are only made known to the spiritual character. Now the true spiritual man has all experience at his feet to dispose of, to reject or

*Deep
things can
only be ap-
prehended
spiritually*

accept according to the dictates of the Spirit, he himself being beyond the reach of the things wherein this judgment operates. For it is as spiritual beings, and not carnal, that we possess the mind of Christ. None teacheth us or judgeth us. 'Who has known the mind of the Lord or being His counsellor hath taught Him?'

III

I. AND yet, I myself, brethren, did not speak to you as spiritually minded beings, possessing the mind of Christ, but I spoke to you as to carnal men, *Laying a true foundation* still entangled in the mind of the flesh, and in Christ the merest babes, needing milk, not real meat. That was your condition. You were not able to receive what I might have told you. And that is still your state. The mind of the flesh works in you still. You are not spiritual, you are the human being, the human rent by division and strife, one of you saying that he is Paul's disciple, another that he is Apollos'. That is not the divine unity, wherein Paul planted and Apollos watered, and wherein all life and growth is of God. What is Paul or Apollos? Servants of your faith, each one according to the task assigned by God. In this great oneness each receives the fulfilment and reward of his own function, sower and tiller all belong to one unity which is God's field and harvest, or God's building. In ourselves we are nothing. What if I, resembling a good and skilful architect, laid a foundation on which another is building? My function was an expression of God's own grace imparted to me, and all the building similarly is of God, its parts

expressing the grace which He confers. If a man misapply his own mission, and attempt to lay a foundation other than that already laid which is Christ Jesus, let him be sure he will receive the appropriate reward for such a corruption and reversal of the grace God gave him. Or if, instead of building on this foundation gold and silver and costly marble and stone, he build wood, thatch, straw, he shall certainly receive the appropriate reward of this faithlessness. The fire will burn up his work. The great day of truth will dawn, and reveal his faithless evil work, and the havoc he has made of the Church. It will all be destroyed, all pass away, yet shall he himself thereby be saved. For this is God's temple, God's building, the Spirit of God dwells here, and you yourselves are the one building of God, and therefore not one shall perish though the evil doer reap his own destruction.

18. CLEVERNESS and the wisdom of the world are not sufficient for these things. Thereby you may become self-deceived. And if one must become a fool in order to be wise, this is the wisest course, for the world's wisest is a species of folly. 'He taketh the wise in their own craftiness' (Job v. 13). 'The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity' (Ps. xciv. 11). There is nothing in merely human wisdom, and why? because you already have the wisdom that includes all, that includes Paul, Apollos and Cephas, yes, and the world, life, death, the present and the future; it is yours because it and you are Christ's, who is of God, and who therefore includes it all.

*Self-
deception
to be
guarded
against*

IV

1. WHAT need have we then of any other wisdom than this divine sort? We are servants of Christ, we *God is* have the stewardship of God's mysteries. *the judge* And as such we must be faithful. It is small matter to me what men decide about me, what their criticisms may be. These human judgments and criticisms do not concern the truth of the Gospel. It is the day of the Lord that judges man, separating truth from fiction. Therefore I do not even judge myself, I do not exercise my conscience over my degree of faithfulness or the reverse. But that is not my justification, I am not justified simply because my conscience is at rest, I am justified because God is judging me. Wait then for His judgment. It will come to pass — that severance of truth and falsehood, faith and faithlessness. Leave it to God and do not usurp his function before the time, when the light shall shine, when the darkness shall collapse, when the hidden purposes of the heart shall resolve themselves, and man's praise and honour shall come to him from God alone.

6. HAVE you learned from me and Apollos? and are you going to make these new acquisitions and possessions a thing to be conceited and self-sufficient about, a thing to judge others in, *The apostles as an example* and put yourself above another? But indulge nothing beyond what is written in our teaching.

This sensitiveness to praise or blame, and this setting of one teacher above another is no part of the Gospel. Whence come your enlightenment, your wisdom, your

treasures of joy and deep riches of the spirit, whence your fulness, completion and victory? From yourselves? Or is it given you in Christ? Yes, that is your state in Christ, yet has the Kingdom still to be striven for, you cannot yet call these things your own, and boast of them as such; whilst the world still rules, whilst we apostles are like arena criminals condemned to make a spectacle for others, whilst we are defenceless and weak, will you boast of your victory, will you be strong and self-sufficient? Whilst the world and angels and man unite to watch our struggles and efforts, are you reigning at peace with the saints in Christ? Whilst we are fools, are you wise in Christ? Whilst we are dishonoured, have you the safety and the glory of the truth? Yes, all that is true, yet I would have you not to glory over it, but to remember the condition of us who taught you. We are still hungering and thirsty, we are still naked and buffeted and amazed, we still work with our hands to gain a living. We are reviled and we bless, we are persecuted and we endure, we are cursed and we turn it aside. Up to the present moment, the very moment that I write to you, we are the outcasts and pariahs of society, its very dregs and off-scourings. Think of this when you are tempted to become wise and self-sufficient in your own eyes, to set one man's teaching above another's, and make the Christ a matter of vainglorious disputation and theory.

14. AND yet I would not speak harshly to you and condemn you, but I appeal to you as to children whom I love. Am I your teacher? Am I not rather the father that begot you in the faith by the Gospel and is that

not something more than a mere teacher — a man may have many tutors but only one father. If that is our relationship then be like me, be imitative of me. That is why I have sent you Timothy, my faithful, my beloved son in the Lord, to tell you of my bonds, of my life in Christ, and to remind you of what my teaching is and always has been in the Christ. But because I have not come myself, there have arisen certain persons among you with an exaggerated opinion of their own importance. And that being so, I shall, if the Lord so will, come to you myself and visit you, and when I come, it will not be with the dialectic of these self-assertive teachers, but with the word of power. In that is the kingdom of God, not theory and contention but spiritual power. What then? Shall I come to you as a master with rod and rule, or in the spirit of love and gentleness?

*Paul as
father
rather
than
teacher*

V

1. AND something else clings close to this spirit of self-righteousness. Have you yourselves, you who belong to the Spirit and not to the flesh, have you rid yourselves of the sin which disgraces your ancient city and makes her a by-word, and the shameful traffic in immorality for which she is so notorious? Are you spotless? Is fornication a thing unknown in your midst, amongst your members? Or is the old leaven still at work in you too, who belong to the Church of God in Corinth, amongst the saints as well as in the gentile streets of the city? You know that it has not yet been cast out.

*The sin
of Corinth
denounced*

Why have you not 'put away the evil from among you' as Moses decrees in the law (Deut. xxii. 24). In you this leaven has culminated in a manifestation of evil worse than anything heard of among the Gentiles, a scandal wherein a son has sinned against his own father and his father's wife. And all the time you believe yourselves to have achieved something! Under the law such offenders were taken out of the city by the whole congregation and stoned without the gate. In our spiritual church of faith this type and example should have taught you for ever to reject from your midst the spirit that works this evil and the persons who do it. But this sin has not been hidden from me. Absent in body, I have been present in spirit, and in that spirit I have already, as in your presence, as in the midst of the whole congregation, searched out and judged and given over to the devil from which it springs this old leaven of fornication and hell, thereby abandoning it to the doom that is coming on all flesh. For God is judging the flesh. Therefore I wrote to you in a former Epistle to separate yourselves *Separate* utterly from the fornication of the world, to *yourselves* have nothing to do with its traffic and merchandise and all the robbery and greed and superstition and idolatry which centre round it, bidding you to come out of the world and be separate. But now I write to bid you beware of its presence in your very midst, beware of those so-called 'brothers' in whom the spirit of the world still works, who though they be called brethren are still the fools of lust, of greed, of drunkenness, superstition and rage. God judges the world, and His judgment comes apace; but now see that you judge the saints. 'Put away the evil from your midst.'

Let not the old leaven find its way back again. You had purged it out, your Church was like the new paschal loaf, eaten with the passion, eaten with the lamb of the sacrifice, in which no leaven is used. Now, our sacrifice is the paschal lamb and the unleavened bread, and the feast wherein they are partaken of is the spiritual Christ, crucified by the world, and the purity and freedom from the spirit of the world which accompany this sacrifice. Let us enjoy that feast, my brethren, untainted by the fermenting liquors of the world — the feast of *sincerity* and *truth*.

VI

I. NOW another matter — the Greeks are devoted to litigation, it is a passion with them, but what has that to do with you? Are you going to haunt the law-courts of Corinth and with cases which you bring against one another! This has little to do with the true judgment and justice which your faith exemplifies. That is capable of judging angels, and if you have it are you not even capable of settling these business disputes which arise amongst yourselves? Have you no one wise enough for that, but must you go to law with one another, and invoke the methods and assistance of a corrupt judicial system to get the better of your brother? Questions of everyday life then cannot be settled by the Church, but you must needs take them before those who know nothing of your faith, and whom the Church on that account esteems as of no account. Yet you bring your quarrels and disputes before them! And why do such disputes arise? Is it

*The error
of litigation in the
Church*

not because you still have in your midst the old spirit of over-reaching and dishonesty? I declare it is better to be wronged, to be cheated and robbed, and to take the injustice and say no more about it, for that would more resemble your calling than to do the opposite. Yes, for the old world of wickedness that God is judging, which is for ever excluded from His Kingdom, is still lurking in your midst. O do not be deceived by it, whatever cloak it may put on! Fornication, idolatry, adultery, sodomy, dishonesty, greed, drunkenness, cursing, theft — these are the things that hide the Kingdom of God, and they can never win it. Were you once involved in them, and were you purified, cleansed, justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the spirit of our God? Yes, you were, you had won clear of that spirit of perdition, but see that it does not entangle you again, know it for what it is.

12. TRUE, I am free, I am independent, and can act as seems good to me, yet, though nothing is bad in itself, evil in its influence is dangerous. I am a free man, but I will not be mastered by any influences. Food and drink have nothing to do with my real being, they affect the belly, not me, you say, and I am in my true self independent of them. Yet that physical part of you is doomed to destruction along with the material things that feed it. Perhaps you would dare to apply the same view to the body. Never! The body is not for fornication. It is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. And as the Lord was raised from the dead by the power of God, so shall we be raised. For there is nothing legitimate or natural for you in an appetite which demands such

*Man not
subordinate
to physical
nature*

vile institutions and uses for its satisfaction. Your bodies are no longer carnal, they are members of Christ. Shall I take that which is spiritual and convert it into the very opposite, change the limbs of Christ into the flesh of a harlot? 'They twain shall be of one flesh,' says Moses, and so this awful substitution takes place, and in the place of Christ's body we find that of a harlot. Such then is their practice, this besetting sin of Corinth. Flee from it. For the One Spirit makes us one with the Lord. That is the truth, of which the other is the lie. Just as in the truth man cannot separate himself from the Lord, for there is but one Spirit, so in the false, in the carnal action, man cannot separate himself from the sin to which he surrenders, he sins not against another only, nor does the wrong of his action merely affect that which is outside himself. He cannot excuse himself by saying 'it has nothing to do with my true being, it is inherent in the body only, and I disclaim its connection with me, though as a physical being I am forced by the power of Nature to submit to it, even as I am forced by other appetites to eat and drink!' The reasoning is false. Your bodies are spiritual structures, the spirit that dwells in you is of God, and your bodies are correspondingly spiritual, as temples, rather than animal organisms; they owe allegiance not to the physical self, but to Him who redeemed them at a price. God Himself is to be glorified in your bodies.

VII

1. YES, my brethren, it is a good thing for both man and woman to be above all sexual intercourse. You wrote and asked me if that were good, and I answer yes. But marriage exists to prevent fornication. It is a step towards chastity. The ideal is to rise above all physical union of the sexes. Perfect chastity is a higher condition than the married state, and the intercourse of married persons, of husband and wife, is condoned and allowed, not commanded. I would that all men had reached the condition with regard to these questions that the spirit has conferred as a gift on me; but, as it is, we must have marriage, and those that are married must follow its rules. Husbands and wives, you are not masters of your own bodies. Each must do as the other has a right to demand in this important matter, and if by mutual consent you abstain from it altogether for a time, giving yourselves more thoroughly to prayer, and guarding against the entry of the spirit of evil through the avenue of indulgence, that is the best rule to observe.

8. NOW, whether married or unmarried, my advice is — remain as you were when God first called you into the truth. If married, do not seek separation. Husband and wife may not both be in the faith, nevertheless if the one to whom the truth has not yet come is agreeable to remain with the other, there should be no thought of separation. Both will be sanctified by the presence of

the truth in the household, and likewise the children also, and who knows? probably the one that has faith will save the other. But if you were unmarried or widowed when the truth first came to you, then my advice is — do not change your state. Be as I am — and live a life of total abstinence from the claims of the body in this direction. But if this is beyond you, then marry; marriage is far better than unsuccessful efforts at this form of self-mastery. Now all this is only an expression of my own opinion, but the following is a commandment to all married persons. Let neither husband nor wife seek separation; or if they must be separated, let neither marry again whilst the other lives, but let them rather, if possible, be once more reconciled. That is the Lord's expressed command and no matter of opinion.

17. FURTHER, in other matters besides marriage, I enjoin the same rule as that which I have just explained. After the truth has come to you, *In other matters also* make no outward change in your manner of life, that is to say, in such matters as the circumcision or uncircumcision. Let it not make the slightest difference what you were before you received the truth, for in the truth these differences are seen to be nothing, so remain as you always were in this matter. For the keeping of God's commandments is all that matters. Similarly, if you were a slave when called, do not seek to obtain manumission, but even prefer to continue in the old calling. You know now that you are Christ's freedman and bought out of slavery at a heavy price. That freedom is everything, for those that were of free birth when called are now

the slaves of Christ. Let then neither bond nor free be in spirit the slaves of men; that is all the faith demands; in outward respects remain as you were.

25. SOME are married when called into the faith; some have had wives, but have put them away; some are unmarried, and have never been married *Chastity a noble thing* and have on no occasion indulged the sexual impulse, but are virgins. To all these I repeat the same advice. Stay as you are, as you were before God called you; and this even applies to the last class, those who have never known sexual intercourse. To these I would give no definite command, and yet even here, I will give my opinion, and I will give it with the consciousness that in this matter I have been faithful myself, or rather that God in His infinite mercy has taken pity on the weakness of my flesh, and made me by His own power firm and trustworthy in the matter. Well, my opinion is that perfect chastity, abstention from marriage and all sexual intercourse is a noble thing in a man, and the reason of that is that the world is changing, the end of the old order is near, and the doom of the physical approaches. We are called to attend to something higher than marriage and its cares. The whole outward form and manner of the universe is changing and passing away. Marriages, feastings, funerals, business and worldly matters may continue, but the time is short. Rise above them, and be as if they were not, even though you take part in them. I would have you without such cares; and you know that a married man thinks of his wife and cares about his business and the world for her sake, whilst the unmarried man or woman who lives a virgin life is

free to dedicate that life to the Lord. But of course, if such an one, who has never touched a woman, elect to marry, he does so with good conscience, sinning not; only such persons, whether male or female, will find that their physical appetite puts obstacles and trials in their way, the details of which I spare you. Of course, if a man is not certain in his own mind, if he has lingering regrets that he has never used this important function of mortal man, let him marry by all means, he does no wrong thereby. But if he is certain, if he has clearly determined that to live and die a virgin is for him the best course of all, then let him keep his resolution, and he will do well by it. It will be the best and greatest course of all, though he who marries may rightly be congratulated on so doing. Lastly, a wife of course is bound to her husband for his lifetime only — if he dies, she is free to marry again, but let her second choice not be one of the heathen, but one who belongs to the faith. But, as I said before, I believe it to be better that she marry not again, but remain a widow, and in so saying I believe that my sense in this matter is governed by the Spirit of God.

VIII

I. NOW as to the question of obtaining meat which has been first sacrificed on one of the city altars (and *Regarding meat offered to idols* meat is not often purchasable nowadays which has not been killed in this way). The idea of course in the minds of those who have been accustomed in the past to partake of these sacrifices is that there is some connection between the meat so sacrificed and the god to whom it has been

rendered as a sacrifice. That is a very fixed idea in the minds of many, that to enter the precincts of the temples, purchase the sacrificial meat as prepared by the priests and their acolytes and take it home with you, is to subject yourself to all sorts of evil influences from the spirits, gods, devils who haunt these scenes and acts of worship. Now recollect our point of view — that these gods or demons, however real they may be to those that believe in them, a vast congregation indeed of gods and masters of all kinds, so called and so believed — well, all that world of supposed beings has nothing whatever to do with us, and their images are absolutely nothing at all. That is our knowledge, our science — One God alone, from whom come all things, and for whom alone we exist, and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom comes the universe, the sum total of all things, inclusive of ourselves whose means of existence are found in Him alone. This divine oneness and allness is our faith, and contrariwise an idol is nothing, and a god is nothing. But do all possess this spiritual science? Alas! no, many there are to whom these beings, of which they were quite recently worshippers, are still somewhat of a dread reality, and to see any one of the brethren enter an idol's shrine and there purchase the meat which is sold in it, alarms the conscience of those whose faith has not yet won clear of the fear of these things. Now to you and me food is a small matter. Meat will not bring us any nearer to God; whether we eat it, or not, makes no difference to our condition. Our fulness, or our wants are dependent on things spiritual, not on physical food. But it is important that he whose faith still exists fearfully and haltingly should not be led by your example to do

that which is going to have a darkening and dangerous effect upon his mind. For if with his weak conscience and his fears and semi-belief in the beings he has so recently rejected, he return to their shrines and take a part in their feasts, is it not likely that this will have an influence upon his mind, and work on him to his own destruction? And so your clearer knowledge is likely to rob him of his chance to escape, you are doing your best to make the way out more difficult for him, and so defeat the very purpose of Christ's death, which was to free our weak minds and souls and consciences from idols. O sooner than that, sooner than handicap him in his fight with the old falsehoods, what a small matter it would be to eat no meat again for ever! Yes, we all have some knowledge perhaps but remember this — knowledge by itself only tends to make us self-satisfied: it is love that builds.

IX

I. AND in relation to all these questions let that be your first thought. Do not think only of the freedom that your faith and knowledge give you. *Paul does not exercise his right to be paid* Remember that knowledge may make a man self-sufficient and self-important. It is love that builds. I for instance am free — I am an apostle. I have seen the Lord Jesus myself. At Corinth, at any rate, my apostleship is unquestioned, because I have there a very certain witness to, and evidence of, the authenticity of my credentials; you yourselves are my credentials. I am the founder of your faith, your church. I repeat then that I have all the rights of this position. I have the right to live

on the gospel, yes, and to support a wife, if I so choose, on the gospel, to take her with me, as do the other apostles, and our Lord's brethren in the flesh, and Cephas also. The vinedresser, the shepherd, the soldier earn their living by what they do. We have the same right ourselves. 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' These ideas are not my own — they are laid down in scripture. Moses' words have a spiritual meaning, they refer to us and our faith. Do you think that anything in that law merely refers to cattle, and has not some moral or spiritual significance? This text means the law of supply whereby the worker lives through his work and is glad and hopeful thereby, partakes in the blessing he bestows. And such rights have I, they are mine according to the scriptures — I have a right to be paid by you, and to exercise authority over you. Others already do this, but I have more right than anyone, since it is I who am the founder of your spiritual good fortunes, and that includes also material well-being. But I have never exercised this right, my own idea has been that the gospel of Christ should not bind any burden upon men, however small, that is to say, so far as I was concerned. And yet you know that the priests who serve the altars and sacrifices make a living out of it, and similarly the Lord expressly declared that those who teach the gospel should live by it. But you know that I do not exercise the right and never have. And why not? Well, that is my affair! At any rate, I am not writing this now preparatory to claiming any compensation in the future. Far from it — I would rather anything than that my special reason for satisfaction and self-congratulation

*The reason
for his un-
willingness
to receive
pay*

should be taken away. What is that? you ask. The gospel? Oh no, that does not affect me in a personal sense — I have to preach the gospel, woe unto me, if I preach it not. If I enjoy it, and do it willingly, I am well paid. If it is distressful to me, still I have my stewardship to fulfil, and must be faithful to it. But what is my special reward, what is the peculiar compensation which accrues to me out of the pains I take in spreading this teaching? Why, just the doing it for nothing — preaching the gospel at no man's charges — that is my special privilege. In other words, the privilege and the right which I most relish and cling to most earnestly, is just this — to make no use of my rights and privileges!

And I declare I carry that principle through all that I do. I absolutely neglect my own point of view.

What it means to be all things to all men Other people's opinions, other people's beliefs and creeds and traditions, other people's weaknesses — these all become my own.

The freer I am myself, the more I seem to become the slave of others! And though this is past a joke, yet I do it willingly, because thereby I win people. At one time the Jewish tradition and the law are everything to me — that is because I am with Jews. And now they are nothing to me — because I am with Gentiles. Oh yes, the law is something to me, the divine law, Christ's laws I mean, but not the law of the Jews. But with the weak I become weak myself — all things to all men in fact, if only I can win a few. And why do I do all this? Why do I take everybody else's point of view except my own? For the sake of the Gospel, because I wish to have a share in it myself — on just the same principle as the athlete trains for

a contest. He sacrifices everything to the one end, if he can only carry off those much coveted laurels. And so a man must sacrifice himself, his own prejudices and predilections, and self-esteem, if he is to gain that immortal chaplet. That is the secret of my life. I do not hit out at random, but I go to work in a scientific manner, like one who trains for a boxing match. My blows are well and cunningly directed. They are aimed at myself, my physical being, my physical ego; otherwise what guarantee is there that I shall be saved myself, even though I have preached to others.

X

1. THE fact is, brethren, baptism and partaking of the bread and wine, and your membership in the Church of Christ show forth your status as the spiritually elect of God — but remember, you are not thereby perfected. There may yet come another falling away, as with those who were called in the old days in a similar manner to us. What though they were all under the cloud in the moment of revelation, and all passed through the sea, and all ate the spiritual manna and drank the spiritual drink which flowed from the rock. The rock is said to have followed them wherever they went. That rock means the Christ. Now mark and learn the lesson. Many of those original founders of our faith 'were slain in the wilderness' (Num. xiv. 16). The perfect will of God was not fulfilled in them and thereby we can discern the truth about ourselves, for they are types. They teach us not to lust, as some of them 'lusted' (Num. xi. 4, 34). Yes, our fathers took

*Church
member-
ship no
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perfection*

part in that great piece of history, they witnessed that divine manifestation of God, and yet though part of all that, they were not all elect. There took place in their midst a corresponding reprobation and apostacy of some. They worshipped idols, and made an image to Jehovah, and made a pagan rite of his sacrifice. 'The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.' They committed fornication, and 23,000 fell in one day. They tempted the Lord, and were destroyed by serpents. They murmured, and the destroyer fell on them. On us has come the fulfilment of history. What happened before is the type of that which happens now, what was written before was written for the guidance of those on whom these days have come. All that past is contained in the history that is being made. Therefore let us beware, beware of 'lusting,' of 'fornication,' of 'idolatry,' of doubting and murmuring. If our eyes are not open to the significance of those warnings, we too shall fall, even though we think we stand. It is God alone that can save us; in Him there will always be a way of escape however hotly the temptation press in on us, for such temptation must needs come to those that are but human. But mark me, note what I say. Beware, O beware, of idolatry, of pagan feasts and rites. Study well my words. That cup over which we pronounce the blessing, and the bread which we break, assembling ourselves together for the purpose — have they anything to do with the rites observed by pagans, and can we who take this cup of the Lord fall into the error of idolatry? Certainly the image and the meat sacrificed to it are nothing — we know that. But the heathen sacrifice 'not to God, but to devils.' (Deut. xxxii. 17).

And to partake of the feasts by which these devils are worshipped is to lay yourself open to the strong influences that hang over such rites. Just as *Pagan rites very different from the table of the Lord* in that Israel which now bears the name of Israel after the flesh, the people who share in the sacrificial feast, share also in the Altar. Can we then, who take the cup of the Lord and partake of this feast, have anything whatever to do with the feasts of the devils? O beware of the subtle contaminating influence of idolatry! Our feast is a spiritual one; the words of blessing pronounced over the cup, and again over the bread, they mean our share in the blood of the Christ, our membership in the infinite body of the Christ, just as we all partake of the one loaf which is broken and given to all with the accompanying words of blessing, so are we all members of that one divine spiritual body. That is the meaning of our feast. Can such a feast as that have in it any taint of idolatry? Mark well the types I have spoken of, which the scriptures contain! Shall the table of the Lord (Mal. i. 7, 12) be polluted by you through intercourse with devils? Will you 'provoke him to jealousy with strange gods?' (Deut. xxxii. 16). What possible connection can there be between our spiritual feast and the table of devils? Granted — all things are lawful to those who are free and emancipated. But it does not follow that there is no danger, no destructive power lurking round things which in an absolute sense are harmless. Seek what serves the common good, seek what builds and edifies, seek not your own. You are of course at liberty to purchase whatever you please where meat is sold, and ask no questions about it. Similarly, you can dine with friends not of the faith,

and eat whatever they set before you. That is our freedom. 'Is not the earth the Lord's and the fulness thereof?' (Ps. xxiv. 1). But if your host inform you, 'this meat was sacrificed to such and such a god,' then keep the rule of absolute abstention from idolatry. You may consider yourself free, and think that you partake of all things by the grace of God, and are able to give thanks therefore with a good conscience, but if you are really free, why should this action affect the conscience of another, and be misinterpreted? It is better not to eat of it where other people's consciences are at stake. Seek not your own point of view, lean not to that, although you know yourself to be as free as Christ has made you in all such matters of eating and drinking, or whatever other things you may be doing, but seek the glory of the one God, seek to commend yourself to all men, whether your company be Jewish, Greek or those who are of the faith. O think not of yourselves, but of them! That is always my point of view, to please all in every way I can, that they may find salvation; follow me in this attitude, my brethren, as I follow the Christ.

XI

2. YOU do remember and mark my words, I know, and you do keep the rules and the instructions which I lay down. I commend you as an obedient flock, and therefore listen now to another rule, a tradition I wish to be observed in our churches. Let men be bareheaded at our meetings, but let the women still wear the head-covering, as has always been the custom, and not

*Paul's
views on
women in
the Church*

thinking themselves free, as they begin to do, appear bareheaded like to men. And why? There is a reason. If a woman is to appear bareheaded like a man, then let her cut her hair, and wear it in the way that men wear theirs. That would be ugly, you say, and I agree. There is then a difference between the man and the woman; and what is our interpretation of it? Mine is this. Man stands for God; but woman stands for man. The head of the man is the type of Christ governing the body, and the head of Christ is God. The man then in every way stands as the type of the divine, the image and likeness of God, and with unveiled head he stands in the presence of God. But woman represents the glory of man; and in the presence of the angels of God man's glory should be veiled. A woman's beauty is her modesty. Her long hair is her glory, because it clothes and covers her. The male comes first as the representative of God, and the female next as the representative of man. In the second chapter of Genesis the difference made between the creation of man and of woman lies, as I interpret it, in these two different types, the one of God, the other of man; and so I advise you to keep the old custom whereby men wear their hair short, and bare their heads in prayer or preaching, but women wear their hair long, and in praying or in preaching they keep their heads covered. I advise you, I say, to keep this rule, but if you intend to argue the point with me — then I declare I am ignorant of any such custom, and the churches of God know it not!

17. NOW in this next point I cannot add any commendation to the advice I am going to give you, for

the reason that things are far from well, and that you are receiving harm where you ought to get only good. It is an excellent thing that you assemble yourselves together that you may get mutual profit thereby, but not if thereby differences and divisions arise amongst you. This I have heard to be the case, and so in a measure I believe it to be; because these divisions, it would seem, have a part to play in our faith, whereby the false are separated from the true, and true faith is tried and tested. Similarly taking food and drink in common, arriving at this meal hungry and thirsty, is no part of our faith. To dine all together is not to eat the supper of the Lord, especially when some are far better provided than others, and there are great differences in the way you fare at this common feast, and excess even and want are found seated at the same table. I like not such customs as that. Why not take your meals in the ordinary way at home? To eat and drink in such a way is to hasten the doom that is coming on all flesh — that doom and judgment of the flesh which is seen in the sickness, the ill-health and the death that still is found amongst your numbers. Now through the eternal body and blood of the Christ we are released from that fate and judgment that come upon the flesh. We look forward to the appearance and coming of the eternal Christ, and we show forth that peculiar death of his which overcame death and releases us from it. That is what the Lord Jesus meant by his words at that last supper the night on which they took him, when he handed the cup to his disciples, and broke the bread for them. I taught you his words and his

*Divisions
and abuses
at the
Lord's
table*

*The last
supper
described*

action on that occasion, as they were given me by those who were present. After taking the bread, he gave thanks, spoke the usual blessing, and handed it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is surrendered on your behalf. In future, when you break bread thus, and give thanks, remember my body, remember me.' In handing the cup after dinner, he said, 'This is the new covenant, sealed in my blood. In future, whenever you take wine thus together, think of this new covenant, remember my blood.'

Do you then, my brethren, when you come together, eating and drinking, with the intention of carrying out his injunction, and recalling his words, do you really discern beneath this semblance and type of bread and wine the eternal body of Christ to which we belong? Do you really celebrate that wondrous death of his, which differed from all other deaths in that it is to be followed by his second coming and eternal presence in the world? Examine yourselves on these points, and assemble together in that spirit only. Otherwise you will only eat and drink the doom of all flesh, as it comes upon the whole world. But if you discerned that infinite eternal body, if you understood the meaning of Christ's death in the flesh, and what is signified by the shedding of his blood, and the giving up of his mortal life and material body — then, my brethren, there would not be so much sickness and disease and death in your midst as there still is. You would not be bound up with the world in the common doom of perishing mortality, but by first judging yourselves, you would then escape the general ruin. Such feasts as you observe, where the eating and drinking predominate over the teaching,

*Its
spiritual
meaning
explained*

have little in keeping with the Lord's supper and this can be avoided by eating first at home, and then when you come together, giving place to one another, and taking the bread and wine as it comes to you. There are other details in connection with this matter which I will arrange when I see you.

XII

1. NOW as to the phenomena of your faith which show in a special way the presence of God and the action of the Spirit. Recollect this Spirit is one. Many of you are moved far beyond your ordinary capacity, and do things which in your own strength would be utterly impossible to you — you prophesy, teach, heal, speak with tongues, and perform wonders, marvels — and this is not yourselves, it is the spirit by which you are possessed. But recollect, my brethren, there is nothing in this similar to those possessions by spirits you were once familiar with in the old religions. At one time that worship was part of your life. You were carried away willy-nilly as you were led in the service of these dumb idols. And because this type of worship was so familiar to you, I bid you remember that, if anyone is possessed and cries out a curse on Jesus, such possession you will know comes not from God, whilst on the other hand to acknowledge Jesus as Lord can never be done except by those to whom the Spirit has been imparted. Now this Spirit, as I say, is one, absolutely one, throughout all its manifestations, and that is why all those phenomena which represent to us its operations are so mutually

harmonious and complementary. One man may evidence one kind of gift or service, one man's sphere of usefulness or inspiration may differ entirely from another's, but he will not differ in the spirit. *The oneness of the Spirit* It is the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God which imparts, ordains, inspires, possesses. The word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, faith, gifts of healing, inspiration and genius, prophecy, spiritual insight and discernment, tongues and the interpretation of tongues — these all proceed in varying degrees displayed by different individuals from the one infinite Spirit. He, that Spirit, is all in all, and one, and all these gifts are constituted in His action and operation. The Christ is as it were one infinite body, wherein all the parts and members are mutually helpful and interdependent. In the unity of the same organism there cannot be inharmonious contradictory parts. Hand cannot say to foot, I have no need of you. Ear and eye are different members and have different functions, but what if the ear said to the eye, 'because I am different from you, we belong to different bodies,' would it be true? And so all of us were baptised into one vast body, the infinite Christ — Jews, Greeks, slaves, and free — and we all drank the wine of the one Spirit. Hence these different gifts, functions and offices which operate in us. This very variety constitutes the essential being of the Spirit, because the Spirit includes all. If the body were all eye, where would the hearing be? If it were all ear, where would the eyebrow be? Every part is beautifully formed to assist and be complementary to the others; none is otiose, negligible or useless, but on the contrary those very parts which are held in least honour often have the most important

functions, and the visible parts of the body which form its beauty are the most dependent on the organs which are not seen and are less esteemed. If one member suffer, all suffer with it, and no one part of the body can be affected, for good or ill, without all the others feeling it. So is it in that infinite spiritual body of the Christ, which we together constitute, of which we are all members. Whether in the church there be those that are called apostles, prophets, teachers, healers, helpers, officers, speakers with tongues — what is this but the activity of one life? Because it is one thing, all are not therefore apostles, nor all prophets, nor all teachers, nor all healers, nor all speakers with tongues, nor all interpreters. True, some gifts are greater than others, and it is right to wish for the greatest gifts of all and in that respect, I will point out to you a way that is better than all others.

XIII

1. AND the way I will show you is the way of perfection. I may have knowledge, but it is still *The way of* fragmentary, I read as it were on a mirror *perfection* the reflections which I cannot yet quite — *love* make out. I prophesy partially, not fully and perfectly, and so is it with other gifts of the kind, tongues and healing and so on. These are, as it were, but the infancy of the Spirit, its first faint babblings and lisps, but love is full, complete, perfect. Here and now it is the all-inclusive, towards which all these other gifts point, and when love is fully come, there will be an end of these partial utterances of the Spirit. Therefore love is above all things necessary. What are

all these other gifts without it? What is the speaking with tongues, the utterances of men or angels, without it? Merely a repetition of the old religions with the clashing of cymbals and beating of gongs. And what does it avail to prophesy, to have an intellect which can grapple with all mysteries and knowledge, and to have so powerful a faith as to be able to work miracles with it, if love is not the crown, the aim, the end of it all? It is all worthless. And to give away all your possessions without love, and to embrace martyrdom and the stake without love — how empty, how vain and worthless! For love includes all that is good — all patience, kindness, tolerance, forbearance, faith and hope; and love is antidote to all evil, all jealousy, and boasting, all ugliness, selfishness, ill-temper, evil thinking. Love can never take any pleasure in these things, the joy of love comes from truth. And so it shall come to pass that all other things will change, pass, and be no more, but love will remain. All that is partial, imperfect, incomplete must have an end, but love will never fail. In that perfect day of love we shall see face to face, we shall know then as now we are known, and though now we see faith, hope and love, these three, abiding with us, the greatest of them is love.

XIV

1. I TOLD you to desire the greatest gifts, and that is why I bid you earnestly to pursue love, but of those other spiritual things of which I have *Of speaking with tongues* spoken, in my opinion the best, the most useful, is prophecy or preaching. And why? Because it instructs and builds and strengthens. To

utter a spiritual language known only to God is to hold converse indeed with God, to allow the Spirit itself to utter its own mysteries, and that is good. I would have you all to speak with such tongues as that; but this spiritual language, the tongue of God, needs interpretation; and through that interpretation man is blessed with something that comforts, consoles, and builds him up. Prophecy does this, interpreting to others the language of heaven, and building the Church on earth. Therefore is it a greater gift to prophesy than to speak the new tongues of the Spirit, for such words make the Church. The new tongues require interpretation. I shall be no help to you unless I reveal something to you, increase your knowledge of things divine, and act as a prophet and teacher. All tongues and languages and voices on earth have meaning. Even the trumpet, made of brass merely, can summon men to battle, the flute and the pipe can move men most variously. But what if their sounds be not understood? What if their stops and notes be so uncertainly handled that there is no recognition of their meaning? Who will arm himself then for the fray? And of the different languages which men talk, there is not one which is without meaning and interpretation. We call those 'foreign' tongues which we cannot understand, and them that speak them 'foreigners.' So it is with the language of heaven, the tongue that the Spirit speaks with spiritual utterings. It sounds strange and barbarous in the ears of those who do not understand it. It needs interpretation, and for those who understand it not, you do but speak into the air, not into their minds. If you be anxious and desirous for proofs of your spirituality, for

*To speak
with the
under-
standing
is of first
importance*

the gifts and wonders of the Spirit and its activities, then let this desire for an overflowing measure of it in your hearts end always in the furthering of that great spiritual goal, the aim, as I have said, of all the operations of the Spirit, the building up of the Church, of the infinite body of the Christ. To that end pray and sing, bless and give thanks. If I pray with the mind as well as the Spirit, and sing with understanding as well as ecstasy, and interpret to the mind and consciousness the tongue of the Spirit which I utter, then is that great purpose fulfilled. Then will those who hearken to your blessing and giving of thanks say Amen to it. For the demands of the understanding have been fulfilled. But if you give thanks with spiritual voices only, in a language unknown to those who fill the place of the humble listeners and the congregation, however well you do it, the church is not fulfilled and is not edified. My brethren, this language of the Spirit utters itself richly in me, and in more frequent and fuller tones than in all of you, yet would I rather speak five words with the understanding that can help my brother than ten thousand in a language which he does not know. My brethren, you have become as little children in this world, but be not children in understanding, but children only in evil. This speaking with tongues, you say, is a sign, a miracle. Yes, God says, 'With other lips and a strange tongue will I speak to this people, and yet will they not hearken to me.' They are a sign to those who have no faith, and a sign that is not accepted. In your own midst, when the whole church is gathered together as one, what need then of such strange and startling signs? For then are heard the voices of understanding that build the perfect

church, psalm, and teaching, revelation, tongues and their interpretation; and when one from without enters this reasonable temple of worship, the thoughts of his own heart are laid bare to him, he is convicted and judged and made to cry out in his own soul, 'surely God is in you' (Is. xlv. 14). To this great aim let all your worship tend; let psalm, teaching, revela-

*The need
for order-
liness*

tion, tongues and their interpretation be subject to order and arrangement, and so help to build the church. Let not more than two or three at most speak with tongues simultaneously, and let these utterances of the Spirit invariably be interpreted and let them not be too long. Without interpretation there must be no speaking with tongues. Let him who feels this ability commune with himself and with God, and be silent in his ecstasy, unless he can make his meaning clear. Let not more than two or three members speak as prophets voicing the divine, and let the rest listen in silence, and distinguish carefully the truth of the words spoken; and where one or other is moved by revelation to speak, give place to him and let the first be silent. For everyone of you, and not a few only, is able to prophesy, and to do this for the good of all, for there is nothing unruly in the spirit of prophecy. It is subject to him who has the understanding of it, and in the churches of God all is order and peace. There is no disorder in the divine being. Therefore also the women are not to speak in your assemblies. This is the tradition of the law, and it must be still observed. You may think otherwise, you may even be doing otherwise in your churches. But it is forbidden. Are you the originators and only recipients of the Gospel? Did it not come

first to me, and through me to you? And I tell you that the Lord has given a commandment about these things. Perhaps you do not understand it or recognise it? Then you show yourselves to be without the pale of God's ruling and guidance. Woman can learn and question and speak at home, not in public now. Then desire this gift of teaching and prophecy above all others, and allow the speaking with tongues, but let everything be done in an orderly and rational manner.

XV

I. NOW for the fundamental truth of my teaching — not mine, but what I received, the same that was given to me, and that I handed on to you — the Gospel which supports you and is saving you, and will save you to the end, if your faith fail not! This is the heart and soul of that Gospel as I received it and gave it to you, and the whole of it is contained in this, that according to the meaning of the Scriptures the Christ died for our sins and was buried, and then according to the same truth of the Scriptures the Christ rose on the third day. The witnesses of this resurrection are first Cephas, then the twelve, then over five hundred brethren most of whom are alive at the present day, then James, then all the Apostles. These all saw him alive and triumphant after death, and the appearances were in the order I have mentioned. And last of all I myself saw the risen Christ, last as though I were the least and unworthiest of all, the persecutor that is to say of that divine Church of God, which is His infinite body. But the grace of God pierced even down to those depths where

*The heart
and soul of
Paul's
gospel*

I lay, and made me such as I am, and abode with me, in my labours, labours exceeding those of all the others; for the grace of God has worked with me in an extraordinary manner in every way, not only in my first conversion from the lowest depths of opposition to God but in my subsequent labours. This then is the gist and burden of the message, I care not who it be that preaches it, whether I or they.

12. THEN what means this contention amongst some of you that the dead do not rise? But the Christ *The Christ did conquer death* did rise. For death came through Adam, it came through a man, and through a man must come eternal life. If in Adam all die, then must death be conquered where it began, in a man. So rose the Christ from the dead. But if you say there is no resurrection from the dead, then neither did the Christ rise from the dead, and the whole of our teaching collapses, it falls to earth, empty, void, a perfect nothing, a falsity. The testimony we bear concerning God, namely, that He raised the Christ-man from the dead, has no meaning in it. If the Christ exists for this world only and has no eternal existence, we are the most miserable of all the dwellers on this planet!

But the Christ has risen, and his rising is the commencement of a similar resurrection for the whole world. His reappearance after death is like the first fruits of a mighty harvest. The increase and growth of this vast divine process will first include all who belong to him, when his eternal presence will become apparent throughout the world; and this process will continue till 'the end' when there shall exist not one

single power, influence or authority that moves contrary to His will, but everything will be subordinate to the infinite God and Father of All, the Creator. Everything that opposes must be reversed and subdued just there where it arose, namely, in man on earth, until there be nothing left that opposes, and until death itself has been completely obliterated. That will be the end, when death is ended, and God is All-in-all, and even the Christ that saves and redeems exists only as the eternally perfect son subject to the infinite Father, there being no more enemies from which to save and redeem us, thus fulfilling the meaning of the Scriptures. For the reign of the Christ will continue on earth for a finite period, namely, until 'He has made his enemies his foot-stool' (Ps. cx. 1), until all finite death-conditioned things are overruled. 'He hath put all things under his feet' (Ps. viii. 6). All things, but not the Christ himself, for though the Christ has appeared amidst these things, he is not their subject, he is not conditioned by them, he is eternally, spiritually royal, existing only as subject to God, the All-in-all. That is the only significance of that practice which obtains amongst some of you, whereby the living are baptised on behalf of those already dead. It means that this progressive victory over death will ultimately include all who have died. The purpose of the Christ penetrates far beyond the little sphere of this life. But if you think that the Christ only comes to you on earth and for this life, what significance has this rite of baptism on behalf of those already beyond its pale? Unless they too are changed by the infinite operation of the Christ life, the rite is meaningless. And if the dead rise not, if there be no such victory and struggle

at work, what is the significance of present struggles? I have faced the beast in the circus before the crowd at Ephesus, I have run every risk, endured every danger, and won through them successfully — that is your boast, and the glory which you accord me for my service of the Christ; but if in this daily death of mine there is no underlying meaning, if it does not mean that even now Christ in me is fighting his victory over death, and successfully putting it under his feet and rescuing me from it, then what is the use of it all? I would rather say with the disobedient 'Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die' (Is. xxii. 13) for there is no longer any meaning in my struggles. Beware! Do not let sleep overtake you, and your spiritual perception be cheated and fade. This is the result, as the tragic poet says, of that 'bad company that doth corrupt the good.' There are those in your midst who have no knowledge of God. Protect yourselves against their influence.

35. AND now you ask me, How? What is that body which dies not, but comes again? How can flesh and blood not perish for ever, but live on immortal? Does it seem so impossible? Yet even in nature we see the seed buried in the ground, becoming a shrivelled extinct husk, and out of that decay and dissolution springs the new body which the eternal power of God shapes and forms.

Paul explains the resurrection We see every type and pattern of shape and form given to various existences as their bodies, we see the elements of flesh and blood taking on the form of every type of being, man, beast, fish, bird — all distinct and separate entities

Different kinds of bodies

with appropriate bodies. On the same principle the form of body appropriate to the heavenly and spiritual things of God's creation is quite other than those which we see clothing things on earth. The things on earth all have their own special beauties, forms, types and their own splendour. And when we come to that which is spiritual and heavenly, we find that that too has its own appropriate expression and glory. The sun, moon and stars are glorious bodies, each with its own distinct glory and splendour. And the Spirit has in a similar manner its own appropriate distinct body, the spiritual species can by no possibility overrun into and mix with a distinct species of earthly things. Hence the contrast so difficult to grasp in the resurrection of the dead, whereby the spiritual species with its appropriate body appears in substitution of the former human expression of life. On the one hand weakness, corruption, dishonour, comparable to the body of a seed which rots and dissolves beneath the layer of soil; and on the other hand power, glory and incorruption, of which the green shapely stalk of corn may be taken as a simile. But the absolute distinctness of species on earth is a lesson to us, whereby the mind grasps the significance of the great spiritual category of things wholly distinct from the earthy. These things possess spiritual bodies and have no connection with earthy bodies. The glory is distinct. This is the distinction implied by the Bible between Adam, 'formed of the dust of the ground,' who became 'a living soul,' and that other man who is wholly spiritual with a spiritual body, and is conditioned by Spirit only, who gives him his appropriate form. This man is of heaven, not of

*The
distinction
between
Adam and
Christ*

earth, a different order of being, in a different state of existence from that of Adam. Now we have known the former man, and we shall also know that distinct and separate man who is a spiritual being. We have borne that image which is the appearance of an earthy physical man, we shall also bear that distinct heavenly stamp, the peculiar spiritual mode of being. For physical flesh and its laws are remote from the life and laws of the kingdom of God. Do not think that one can pass over into and inherit the other. Nature knows of no such amalgamation as that throughout her infinite being. Rather there must be a total and absolute change, a complete reversal of the mode of being, which is what the Scriptures imply by 'the sounding of the last trump,' when in a timeless instant the spiritual order of being, the incorruptible and the eternal comes as a new order of life, a new dress, a new clothing, a new body for man. That is the moment at which death draws back its foot; it is at the coming of that new body and life and organism which declare and express the immortality and being of Spirit. Then is it that the words come true: 'He hath swallowed up death in victory' (Is. xxv. 8). 'Where is thy sting, O death? Where is thy victory, O grave?' (Hos. xiii. 14), because the law which constituted the peculiar life of the old flesh, the law which made that life perishable, and which was in itself the power of sin, antagonistic to the new law of life, that law has given place to the new nature governed by God. He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ, and to him arise our thanks and praise therefor. Hence no labour of ours is vain, hence we remain steadfast and unmoved, because the work is that of the infinite God, and His action is irrepressible, abounding and never vain.

XVI

1. FINALLY, as to the fund — I have given instructions to the churches in Galatia about this collection, which is to be used by the church at Jerusalem, and I repeat the same instructions to you. I do not wish the money to be collected when I come, but begin now, every Sabbath, to put by something as each is able to afford it. I want you after that to appoint certain members to travel with the amount collected to Jerusalem. If the sum is a large one, I shall accompany this mission myself. For I intend to be with you shortly. I hope possibly to winter with you, at any rate, if the Lord permit, to be with you for a considerable time, not merely to visit you, en route for somewhere else. And I hope that some of you will accompany me when I leave. I shall come by way of Macedonia. At present I remain at Ephesus until Pentecost. The door is open here, wide open, and much work is being done, but the opposition is great. If Timothy comes to you, let him not feel that he is unwelcome, be generous and hospitable, for it is the Lord's work that both he and I together pursue; and send him again to me with your kind thoughts, for I need him here. I have told Apollos again and again to go to you, and to take with him the brethren who usually accompany him; but I have never found him willing, because the opportunity has always been wanting hitherto, but he *will* come, when he is able. Be watchful and alert, stand — for you can stand — in the faith alone, without our help; be brave, and master yourselves. Then you will have nothing to fear.

*Helpful
directions
and
greetings*

I have a thing to ask you, I beg you to remember the work Stephanas has done, the first of those who came into the faith in Achaia. He and his household have constantly ministered to those who are in the faith. They have set themselves to that task and it was a joy to me that they came here. Listen to them, and be guided by them, I pray you, and by all who work with them. Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus refreshed my spirit and yours too by their presence, which made up for your absence. Remember such workers as these.

Greetings are sent to you with this from the churches of Asia, from Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, and the church which assembles in their house. All the brethren salute you. Salute one another, brethren, with a holy kiss.

I now sign this letter with my own hand — Paul — and I subscribe these words. Let him that loves not the Lord be anathema, MARAN ATHA. See, I have written it with my own hand. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you, and my love be with you all in Christ Jesus.

SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

I

1. PAUL, through the divine purpose an apostle of Christ Jesus, and with him Timothy, one of the brethren, salutes the church of God in Corinth, and with that church he includes all those who have been purified by the Christ, wherever they may be living, throughout the province of Achaia. To you all be grace and peace from God who is our Father, and from Jesus Christ whom we acknowledge as Lord.

How good, how full of blessedness is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Comfort dwells with Him, in all ways His nature awakes the *The divine* sense of compassion, and with it strength *comfort* and comfort. I am comforted always in the great dangers and trials which now beset me, and that which upholds and sustains me continually throughout these buffetings serves also for your support and comfort. I know your trials, but God is comforting us. The sufferings of the Christ have this compensation; though all our lives are included in them and they abound in us, there goes along with them the same divine comfort and strength which comforted him; and just as his sufferings and even his death were not endured for any faults of his own, but because of others, because of those near him, because of all humanity, that is also the case with ours. If I suffer, I know that these sufferings are bringing our final victory and

safety from evil nearer, and I know that I suffer for your good; and when God fills me with comfort and strength, that victory over my own sufferings enables me to assist you to the same victory over yours. Both you and I endure these sufferings, but our hope is absolutely sure. Patience and endurance only are required in order to win the predestined victory, for his comfort, his strength is mine, and is yours without fail, without fear. My struggle in Asia has been beyond words; I have been through deep waters; so far as my own powers, my own physical self and will went, I despaired; I had the sentence of death in me, but even so, I knew that my trust and faith were in another, in God who raises the dead, to whom belongs the everlasting victory. And so He succoured me, He drew me out of this manifest death, and set my feet upon it, and I am persuaded now that so will it ever be, and I shall feel His support for evermore — your own work, your prayers and spiritual help assisting — expressed in that gratitude of the many for God's marvellous blessing and succour which He shows to me so abundantly.

12. NOW the only boast I have in myself for this is simply my pure and free conscience which knows that

<i>Paul boasts of his love for them</i>	I live and act in the world not on the lines of man's carnal wisdom, but by His grace, and this is especially the case in my relations with you. You yourselves are my boast, and I am yours, you know it already; I have no other thoughts, no other motive than that (you have known it always and always will know it), even what I write to you now that I have no boast, no claim to aught in
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the day of the Lord Jesus but the love that is common to us both, the love we bear one another.

15. WITH this deep confidence in my heart, it was my desire on the former occasion to come to you as I wrote, to come for the second time and renew the joy we had before in meeting. I wished, as I said, to pass through you to Macedonia, and then to return to you again from Macedonia, and to be sent on my way to Judaea. That was my intention and purpose. Did I lightly change my mind? Brethren, I no longer make plans in the human way. I believe in that yea, yea, and nay, nay of the gospel which can only be arrived at by spiritual means, by faith. Otherwise we get the world's yes and no, changeable and doubtful. Faith gives us the one 'Yea' which cannot change, and God has ever been faithful in His guidance of us. He who sent me to preach the one unchanging Gospel has enabled me in His infinite goodness to show it in my life. He has not made my conduct or my plans light and changeable. For I preach the eternal fulfilment of His promises. That was the gospel which I and Silvanus and Timothy brought you — the absolute accomplishment of God's purpose and the promises of Scripture in the person of Christ Jesus. Him we proclaimed and declared to the world as being the perfect Son of God, in whom we find the positive instead of the negative, the eternal 'Yea' of the gospel, instead of the finite 'Nay' of the carnal law; in him is all the word of Scripture fulfilled, for God is in him. Through him all we on earth utter the everlasting Amen, in joyful unison with the gospel 'Yea'; for it is God who is accomplishing all these

*The reason
for the
change in
his plans*

things; it is God who is sustaining us, and anointing us with the graces of this Christ, placing upon us His own stamp and image, giving us the token and pledge of Himself in the gift of the spirit.

If this then is the gospel which brought me to you first, do not think that the change in my plans for coming to you the second time was due to the mere changeableness and uncertainty of human things or of my own mind. No, I call in God as witness of my own heart and soul that my set purpose in not coming to you was a kind one. I do not claim, remember, to exact from you a mere empty obedience and submission to me. Yet had I come to you when I purposed, I could not have come to you in any other spirit than one of unsparing hostility to those influences which I remarked in my first letter as being still active in your midst — divisions, and the danger of idolatry, and the sins of the heathen, especially fornication. Why should I have come to you again in that spirit? I want your love, I want the joy that we have in common, in our common work. For what is that but to stand in the faith even as you do?

II

I. SO I would not and could not come to you again in sorrow and reproof. Why should I inflict pain on that which is my joy? And why should that bring me pain which was to be my joy? And indeed I wrote that letter with only one intention in my mind. It was that after I had said what I had to say by letter I might then be able to come to you with all that put behind us, and

*He does
not wish to
reiterate
censure*

receive that joy from our meeting and association together which I know you share abundantly with me. If anyone in particular has caused pain, that was no pain to me, for in the singling out of that one who was to blame and the cause of trouble, I thereby no longer impute it to all of you. It was a relief rather than a sorrow that his guilt should become clear, and now that is so, his rebuke is sufficient. Your own knowledge of his wrongdoing is quite enough punishment for him; therefore remember him kindly, be gracious and forgiving towards him; for excessive mortification and punishment only completes a man's downfall. And remember that in doing so, you represent my feelings also. I forgive where you do so; for remember that that forgiveness was for your sake; in the Christ and with your own love set before me I forgave that sin, lest by its means Satan might wrestle me a fall. I know his readiness to lay hold of anything in that nature and to get my mind captive thereby.

I reached Troas then on this intended journey, but arrived there I found no help, no one to work with me, for Titus my brother alone could have helped me. A great door was opened for me there, and I had come to proclaim the Christ, yet I could not stay, I was not able to endure without Titus, so I bade them farewell and crossed into Europe. Yet in my weakness God himself continually causes me to triumph. It is in the Christ that this happens. Through me the fragrance of the knowledge of God is filling the world, like the sweet savour of incense and sacrifice. It is the divine freshness of life in the Christ which forms this fragrance and which makes men whole, and continually points onward to

*The
fragrance of
Christian
truth*

an ever-increasing measure of life, and all its infinite possibilities, when released from fate and death. But this same fragrance of the new life, alas, to those who know it not and who continue in the power of the flesh and its inevitable doom, this very fragrance shows up the stench of their corruption, so that I become to them the thing of all others that they hate, the index and characteristic sign of their own approaching dissolution. Now who is sufficient for these things? That one should be through the Christ that is present in me, both the life and the death of this material world. For that is my position; it is a necessity to me to be all this, it is in utter sincerity that I stand before the world and speak the truth of the Christ as from God in the presence of God. I am not, and you know it, one of those so-called teachers who run round with the Gospel, dispensing it to people for a consideration. I do not make use of letters of commendation to you from the churches, nor do I ask any such testimonials from you to recommend me on my way. Perhaps that is why I have so often to commend myself? But I regard you yourselves as my testimonial and written commendation and character, written on the heart, and read and known by all men. For it is most abundantly evident and clear that in you is the handwriting of the Christ to be discerned, his sign and seal, ministered by me but divinely manifested, written not with a pen and the aid of ink and parchment, but by the spirit of the living God — yes, not written on tables of stone, but on tables of the heart and of flesh.

III

4. SUCH, then, is the only sufficiency I have to put before the world. What have I to recommend me but you — you who are my work? But even this allows me no power of counting anything to myself, it is simply the fact that God has made me the minister of His new covenant. My only sufficiency is the irresistible power of this fact.

Now the old covenant defined and elaborated the doom of sin, and showed the inevitableness of death as its penalty. That was its truth, and hence its glory. And we read that the man appointed to serve this absolute covenant of sin's reward was yet invested with divine glory. That doom was engraven, we read, in letters on stone tables, and it slew. That is the function of the letter of the law, it dooms to death whatever is not in exact accordance with its demands. Yet in receiving and administering to the people this covenant, a glory appeared on Moses' face. How much more glorious then is the ministry of that word which brings life! For the spirit gives life. The glory on Moses' face died away after a while. It could not continue in the presence of the people. That was the reason, as is commonly interpreted, of the veil which Moses placed on his face. The children of Israel, because of that veil, never saw the light of the old covenant fade out and vanish into nothing. Had not the veil been there, they would have looked right on to the end of this covenant of finiteness and death, and so discerned its spiritual sense, but that veil represents the hardening of their

hearts and the dimness of their eyes, whereby they cannot discern the spiritual sense of the scriptures. When Moses is read in their synagogues, the veil is on their hearts still. For the real meaning of that ministry is a spiritual one. As the light of the old covenant which defines the doom of sin fades and dwindles and at last dies away to nothing, the dawn of the new covenant rises and broadens. For the glory of the new (of righteousness) far exceeds the old (of death). It is that glory which we behold when we look beyond the end of the finite and transitory and behold the eternal splendour of that which abides and never passes away. Then, like Moses, who in the divine presence removed the veil again which he had worn in the presence of the people, so we behold the glory of the Lord; and, looking, are changed — changed from the perishable and mortal — into the image of His glory, ever deepening and broadening from glory to glory, the image that is to say of the eternal Spirit. For when the Bible says 'When Moses went in to the Lord, he took off the veil,' the Lord there means the Spirit — the Spirit which has reached us, the Spirit which has freed us from the law of sin and death.

IV

I. SO LONG as I am a minister of such a covenant as this, I will never fear. It is the love of God which has dissolved at last that old hardness and darkness which hid His truth, and in that love we have for ever bidden farewell to the sins that were hidden in the dark. The word of God is ministered by me now in honesty and open-

*Love has
freed him
from fear
and sin*

ness, with a conscience free and unfettered by sin, it is contaminated no longer by deceit and wickedness, but shines forth in all its splendour, and if in some it shines not, that is part of the doom of the flesh which hastens to its end and cannot be illuminated. And what is this light? Is it not the light of God's own creation when He spake and said, 'Let there be light'? And what is their darkness but the original darkness out of which that light shone? Another god than the true God dwells in that darkness, the god of this world, who has blinded the eyes of those that know not faith. The light of the glorious gospel of the Christ does not reach them. For he is the true image of God. It is that image we preach, not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, who is our Lord; we ourselves act merely as your servants. It is all the work, the creation of God who has given us the understanding and knowledge of His glory in the face of His image, Christ.

7. WHAT if this treasure appear to be contained in a vessel of earth? That fact will but serve to make clearer the infinite power of God, without any second or competitor in any efforts we ourselves may try to make. For we dwell at ease and *The spaciousness of true living* spaciously, even whilst we are oppressed and afflicted. We are never at a loss or in doubt, even whilst we do not know which way to turn to avoid our enemies; we are always looked after and cared for, even while our enemies persecute us; we never perish even though we are borne down. The eternal life of Jesus is always plainly shown forth in our bodies, even whilst his death seems operative in us at all moments. Yes, even in this mortal flesh that

wondrous life of his begins to appear, even whilst we are being apparently thrust down to death. The immortal life of Jesus has appeared in our bodies, and we still live immortal, even at the very moment when the power of death is preparing to take us prisoners. The divine life itself is working everywhere; though death pursues me and tries to lay hands on me, it cannot stem the floods of life which reach all through your ranks, even whilst I suffer for it. Nor does this suffering muzzle me. 'I believed and therefore I spake' (Ps. cxvi. 10). I know that there was in the writer of those words the same Spirit that utters itself now. I too believe, and however ardently the wicked may wish my death, I speak — having faith in the eternal Power who raised our Lord from the dead, and will raise us and keep us in that safety with him where death and danger have no power over us. All this wonder is for your sakes, that the overflowing gratitude of great numbers may testify to the grace and glory of the divine.

16. THERE is no thought of fatigue or failure or surrender here; the outward man begins to give place before the advent of that inner man who is for ever renewed, even whilst the outer man shows the evidences of death. A far more exceeding weight of glory and hope is coming into the light, and completely counterbalancing and outweighing these temporary trials. We are looking no longer on the surface of things; our inner eyes are fixed on the invisible which is eternal and which endures for ever; this short-lived evidence of the outer eyes has no corresponding significance but is only

*In it is
neither
fatigue nor
failure*

transitory. We behold in the invisible realm the house and the body of Spirit, substantial and enduring, whilst the outer man is no more than a transitory tabernacle, like that which the people carried through the wilderness, which can be furled up and laid aside for ever. The groans which we are sometimes compelled to utter whilst abiding in this tabernacle are but the expression of a longing — we desire and we utterly need that heavenly covering to replace this earthly; and when we get that new kind of body, we shall no longer like Adam and Eve be found to be naked. We shall be clothed at last, clothed in life, clothed in immortality. We are naked enough in this mortal flesh; and our great need is not to take anything more off, as some regard the stripping of the soul by death — but to put something on, to be so embraced and enfolded by the infinite life that the mortal may be wrung out of us for good and all. Already we have in our midst the earnest of this immortal Spirit. It is God's infinite work, He is now bringing it all to pass, and has wrought us for this purpose, and for this end, namely, this change from the mortal to the divine. There is no need, no reason for despondency or sorrow; our sojourn in the body merely means exile from the Lord, but we live and walk by faith, and so by that faith we are full of a deep conviction and of courage and goodwill in the knowledge that this exiled condition of mortality has been reversed. Now our exile is from the perishable body, and our home is with the Lord. Bearing this in mind, whatever our condition, whether exiled or at home, we seek with great care and energy to observe the dictates of the Lord and to please him; for this passage from the mortal to the immortal, this

complete reversal of our state as living in the Lord rather than in the body, involves as you all know the judgment seat of the Christ, before which everyone who has partaken of this mortal flesh must receive the necessary reward for what he has done in it, either doom if it be of the flesh and worthless, or good if it agree with immortality. All that we are must be manifested in just that way.

V

11. THIS process of the manifestation of the true self as it appears in the eyes of God continues apace,

*The true
self and the
physical
ego*

but it is not understood by men, so we have to be gentle and persuasive with them; yet I believe that in your mind I am known for what I am in the truth. It is that which is your real boast concerning me, it is that alone which recommends me, nothing else can afford you any grounds for satisfaction in me. For my spiritual self which is not in the body exists for God, whilst in my human relations with you I claim nothing, I make no pretensions — as do some who find material for self-congratulation in the outward man. But that is not so with me; for I can no longer look on man from that standpoint. I behold the love of the Christ, I see in his one death the death of all of us already accomplished after the manner of his death — the death that is to say of all that separates us from God, the death of that personal physical ego, and the release in consequence of that infinite and unselfish life which is the love of the Christ, and the life of the Christ, who died and who rose afterwards that it might be available for

all. I no longer then, regard man as physical, but spiritual. The physical is no longer set before my eyes. Christ himself to me is no more a physical being; I see him spiritually, and in that spiritual vision I learn that man is a new creation. All former views of man now perish. He is a new being, all is new and wonderful. This is the work of God today, my brethren. For by this death of the physical in us we are being reconciled to God; all things are being reconciled to Him who is Spirit, through the disappearance of their mortal aspect. What was the Christ who appeared to us in the flesh? Was it not God Himself performing the reconciliation of the world to Himself, severing the sinful side of man from the true, and no longer imputing the sins of that physical man to the spiritual being to whom they do not belong, and making us the possessors of the truth about this, giving us the word which itself has the power to reconcile.

20. IT IS as the minister of this word of reconciliation that I find my office and function, calling you all by means of this word to the reconciliation, acting as its bearer and agent, and on behalf of the Christ inviting you and encouraging you to be reconciled to God. For this is the reconciliation — that even the sinful part of man was the error and wrong which have no part in the true man, even that sinful and erroneous side of life was corrected by the eternal Christ, who himself knew no sin, and yet presented in his own person an image of the victory over sin and the death of sin, as though he had been sin himself.

*The Christ
reconciles
man to
God*

This reconciliation and salvation is not for some

hypothetical future. To think that is so is to take it in vain. It is for now, it is here. 'In an acceptable time have I heard thee, in a day of salvation have I helped thee' (Is. xlix. 8). What is that 'acceptable time,' that 'day' but the day which has now dawned on us? and if we are its servants and ministers, we must show it in our lives. If we are the servants of God, we shall abound in all good at all times, so that that service shall commend itself inevitably to all men. No amount of endurance, troubles, difficulties and dangers, yes, not even punishment, imprisonment, scourging, and riots of the people, no labour, no hunger, no watching shall weary us, but through it all we shall exhibit the signs of the Christ, that wondrous knowledge and holiness, patience and goodness, that love unfeigned which marks the presence of the Spirit, and of this word of truth with man, and the power of God which it manifests. We shall have always at our back and at our front, in left hand and right hand the weapons, shield and armour which God's perfection supplies; we shall be glorious, approved by man, and speakers of the truth, even whilst our opponents cry 'scoundrels' and 'deceivers'; in the midst of endless misconception, ignorance, and misunderstanding the world will accept us; life will be ours and joy, and abundant riches overflowing to the rest of mankind, that neither death nor poverty nor sore chastening can hide; for in the Christ we possess all things, because in the world we own — nothing!

VI

II. SOMETHING has opened my heart to you, Corinthians, and shown me yourselves and your destiny in a larger room, in a grand perspective — free from all the cavil and pettiness of the world's slander. Now do the same for me, my brethren. O grasp the secret of my purpose, the breadth of my career and vision; behold its vast import, and do not lay upon yourselves the cruel limitations of the world's misapprehension and deceit and slander. Away with all that! Have no further dealings with that spirit which possesses the world's idolaters; there can be no means of communication between Christ and Belial, devils and saints, light and darkness. Cast out all that obscures that fair, spacious and exalted temple of the living God, that building which you are! The workings of devilish influences and the power of idolatry have no room or footing here.

*Now cast
out all that
obscures
the ideal*

I will walk in their midst, says God,
 I will dwell among them, [Lev. xxvi. 11 and 12.
 I will be their God, they shall be my people.
 Therefore come out from the midst of them,
 Be separate, saith the Lord, [Is. lii. 11.
 Touch not the unclean thing.
 And I will accept you, and will be to you a father,
 And you shall be my sons and daughters,
 Saith the Lord omnipotent. [11 Sam. vii. 14.

VII

1. WHEN such promises as these are ours, let no contamination either of the flesh or of that which taints and corrupts the spirit enter into you, but be pure and reverently accomplish that holiness which is brought by faithful careful attention to the dictates of God. In that spirit of purity and truth, accept me, bear with me, allow that I am free of the offences that men attribute to me, that I have wronged no one, corrupted no one, as they say I do, and have not made a fortune for myself out of my converts. I know that you do not say these things yourselves, and I do not reproach you. Only beware of the influence which the reiterated statements of the faithless and the idolaters may have upon you. No, I do not reproach you. I glory in you. I have much boldness in speaking to you. I know that in my own heart all trace of condemnation toward you is absent, for in the Christ we live and suffer together as one. I cannot express to you the great gladness and joy of my heart on meeting Titus in Macedonia. I was oppressed beyond measure, fightings without, and fears within — my flesh had no rest, in every possible direction loomed danger and difficulty, and God delivered me, even as He delivers the meek and hears the cry of the helpless. Titus came to me with news of you; and my heart was comforted and strengthened, nay, it overflows with gratitude and joy, as I remember your utter loyalty, and perfect devotion. All my sufferings lifted in the understanding of your love which his news brought to me. My letter pained

*Paul's
sufferings
relieved by
good news*

you, but I do not repent of that now. Though it pained me before, my sorrow now is gone. The pain and sorrow of the world bring death, but that pain and sorrow which God sends result in a change of mind and heart which nothing again can ever make a man repent of. And so it was with you. It was no ordinary pain and mortification that my letter brought you, it was a deep stirring of the divine, of the sorrow that changes us, and with that sorrow came new energy, new desire, the wish to clear yourselves of reproach and to exact justice to the full. I rejoice that you have approved yourselves holy and worthy in this trouble. And what else matters? My letter and its strictures and rebuke concerned more than the individual who did the wrong, more too than the one that was wronged. It concerned your loyalty and faithfulness, and because that held good, I rejoice, and am comforted in my heart. And Titus' courage and hope and joy have also been uplifted by your welcome of him. I had boasted of you to him, and he found you even as I had told him, and as I write, his heart, like mine, goes out to you, at the recollection of your obedience, and of the wonderful care and attention which you paid him when he was with you. How I rejoice now in all this!

VIII

I. OUT of the midst of all their persecutions and afflictions the heart of the churches of Macedonia has been preserved so fresh and fearless that the surplus of their joy and gladness has taken the form of a bountiful gift to God. Their utter poverty too in respect of worldly

*The
liberality
of the
churches*

needs and aspirations has contributed to this gift. They have but one single aim, and that has flowed liberally and richly into this contribution which is for the central church at Jerusalem. They have willingly and of their own accord brought what they could spare, and more than that, into this fund, not prompted thereto by any begging on my part, but because they were dedicated in heart and mind to serve God, and to love Him of their own free will, gladly they gave this present, this means of communication and fellowship

*The fund
in relation
to true
wealth*

with the saints in another land. Titus administered this fund and its collection, and he was so much impressed and encouraged by the Macedonians in the carrying out of this task, that I bade him continue this work which he had begun in Greece, and complete it by also attending to the fund which you are making; and I feel certain that the great increase which you have enjoyed, the blessings of true faith, new knowledge, and the understanding of the word, that all these will be accompanied too by the fullness and abundance of your giving. I enjoin no commandments upon you, but I promote in you a like enthusiasm to that which your brethren have shown. Your wealth, you well know, all that you really have, that is to say, is yours because Christ Jesus abandoned the world; the way he gave up all has brought you great riches, and now is the time to show how genuine is the love which has been opened to you. My opinion is that the time has now arrived for this fund and collection to be completed, and for your final gifts to be made. I know that you have already given sums to it, and your goodwill and desire to give has long been shown.

Complete the matter now, and since you have this desire, give now what you can afford. Our giving is not the kind that injures and depletes oneself in order to confer largess on another; but it illustrates a law of fairness. 'He that gathered little had no lack, and he that gathered much had nothing over' (Ex. xvi. 18). This principle goes so deep that in our faith what you have in abundance will minister to that wherewith they are less well provided, whilst that which fills them to overflowing will supply all that you can want in the same direction. So wonderful is the spiritual manna of the word. I thank God that Titus has the same feeling with me about this fund. My invitation to him to go to you about it chimed in with the plans and wishes he had already formulated in his own mind. So I am sending him, and with him that brother whose name has become famous throughout the churches for his service to the gospel. This brother was elected by the churches to travel with me in connection with this fund. I praise God for this arrangement which met my own wishes in the matter. I seek 'favour and a good understanding in the sight of God and man' (Prov. iii. 4), and I am glad the churches have elected so well-known a man to help me, for the outsiders are sure to criticise my administration of this bounty. This man then and Titus I am sending to receive the collection, and along with them a third brother who has so often served me with the utmost willingness, and is now more than ever eager to do so because of the confidence he has in you. Thus then I recommend this mission of three who are coming to you to receive the fund. As regards Titus, he is my

*Giving
creates
abundance*

*The
mission
of three*

own special representative, and your own fellow-worker; the other two are commissioned by the churches, they show forth the Christ in their great works. Then show these three your love, and show them that what I have told them of you is but the truth, and let your work be known to all the other churches.

IX

I. I DO NOT think there is any need for me to say more about your part in this fund. I have told many of your own readiness to give. I have told the churches in Asia that Achaia has long been laying by for it, and for some time past your example has stimulated them. Now I send the committee of three brethren whom I have mentioned to complete the matter. You will see to it that what I have spoken about you has not been spoken in vain, that when they come, I may not be found to have boasted of you to no purpose, and that I, not to say yourselves, may have no reason to be ashamed. I told them they would find you ready, and that there was no idea in your minds that this fund was a requisition, but that it stood for a blessing. These were the words with which I sped them on their way.

I will say but this, that to sow plentifully is to reap plentifully, and that a niggard spirit will never receive a blessing for that which was not given as a blessing. 'God loveth a cheerful giver' (Prov. xxii. 8). He can make you abound in everything that is good. He can give you that self-reliance and competency within and

without which will accomplish everything good. 'He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever' (Ps. cxii. 9). It is He who supplies 'the seed to the sower, and the bread to the eater' (Is. lv. 10). He shall multiply what you have in Him, your seed and your fruit, and the perfection from which they flow. Those riches grow for those who are simple and honest in heart, and the greatest possession is that gratitude which we feel to God, and that is the secret of this fund which I have organised. It does not merely fill the want of churches elsewhere, it is the sure and abounding fruit of great gratitude to God in our midst. Those receiving it will praise God the more joyfully when they realise the test which this contribution has put you to, when they see your obedience and common acknowledgment of the gospel of the Christ, when they feel the simplicity of heart with which the gift is made to themselves and which is present also in all your dealings towards others, and will pray for you, and long after you in the gospel of God, because of the divine manifestation in your midst. God be praised for His gift which passes all utterance, all power of expression.

X

1. AS FOR myself, Paul, I would do all things in the spirit of my profession, that is to say in a spirit of meekness and gentleness which underlies all the manifestations of the Christ — yes, that is the spirit in which I work, for it is the only way in which the Christ works. But there are some in your midst who take a different view. This Paul, they

*The spirit
in which
Paul works*

say, is very emphatic and outspoken in his letters, but when he comes amongst you, Corinthians, he has less to say for himself. He does not recommend himself as a spiritual leader, a commissioned apostle of the Spirit. He is far less notable face to face than at a distance. Against those whose thoughts and words run on these lines I think that I have a good deal of confidence, my brethren, yes and courage and plain-spokenness, as I fear I may have to show unequivocally when I next visit you, and against these persons themselves. If I do appear to behave as an ordinary undistinguished being, and to live according to the flesh, as they say, let them know that the weapons of my armoury are of the spiritual kind, and that my order of attack and assault is of marvellous efficacy through God for the storming of certain strong places and established positions — mighty indeed for battering down mere theories and speculations, for destroying false systems which rear up their evil heads in pitiable rivalry with the true knowledge of the divine, and able to bind and imprison thoughts that are not agreeable to the confession and obedience of the Christ Spirit. I have weapons too at my command only waiting for the fulfilment of your own obedience to make retaliation and reprisals for all that deviates from the true obedience. Now look at that which is really 'face to face,' and 'present' — as they cast in my teeth my absence, and the weightiness of my epistles when I am away from you, and the insignificance of my presence when I come before you — if your life is *in Christ*, is not mine there too? And do not my deeds when present proceed from that same source as my words in absence? Does it require strong words from me to terrify you into

subjection from a distance? Is not the authority, of which they say I make too much and boast immoderately, is it not given me by God for your building up — not for your ruin — and does it fail me, does it ever make me ashamed of it? Does it not justify itself? I do not presume to judge my own capacities, and to set myself up over against other teachers, and compare my merits with theirs. For my own capacities do not enter into this question. I measure myself by the rule that God has established in me, not by vague standards that have never been and never can be subjected to a true reckoning and computation. My standard is the measuring rod and line of the perfect builder, and that same rule passes as far as to you, and passes on, too, beyond you to other lands which lie further off still. I shall go on, I hope and believe, to those more distant ones, even as I came to you. For I came to you in person, I was the first to bring you the gospel; I do not, as they seem to aver, reach out by my epistles and missions into other people's fields of labour and beyond my own. But following God's measurement and his apportionment of my destiny and sphere, not settling down upon another's work or establishing myself and boasting myself in that on which I did not work, I come to you as to my own. As your faith broadens, so will my mission and purpose broaden in your gaze as God's own ordering and adjustment, until I am borne onward by this same purpose and rule to unfold the gospel in a yet wider circle and to more distant parts of the world, and by that rule and measurement never trespass on another man's field nor ever boast myself in work which was already prepared

*The source
of his
authority*

and begun by others. In fine, 'let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord.' The only man who can stand the test is the one whom the Lord establishes; self-praise is no recommendation.

XI

I. NONE whatever — and yet bear with me a little, my brethren. Endure a little foolish boasting on my part. The spirit of our profession is forbearance and gentleness. Then bear with me a little, as if I too were numbered amongst those of the world who approve themselves. Are you not only too ready to bear with it and to give ear and endure, when others recount their wonderful demonstrations and marks of apostleship, and listen to them even when it is another Jesus they preach, a different spirit which you are receiving, and not the same gospel that I gave you — do you not still bear with them, and even rather enjoy the catalogues they give you of their sufferings, and adventures, of their visions and revelations, all in proof of the doctrine they bring? Then listen also to me, bear also with me awhile, for I am jealous over you, moved towards you, as it were, with the divine jealousy. I betrothed you to one husband, presenting you to the Christ as unsullied and virgin in the faith, and now I fear lest the reasonings of the Serpent intervene and take captive your minds as they did Eve's, and adulterate your purity and your simple hold on the Christ. Let me then recommend myself awhile, and show myself not a whit behind even the most unmistakeable 'apostle' of them all. Even though my speech be not remarkable, my

knowledge is above question, and you all of you know all about me, I have kept nothing back. But the very things which I did specially for your sake they wrest to their own point of view, and bring against me — that you never paid me a salary, never kept me out of your funds, that I preached the gospel in independence, as a free gift, that I humbled myself, and would not be paid anything for my services, but rather was helped by other churches in Asia, and laid no burden upon you. Was this sin in me? I did it, because they do the same, and because I knew that if I did differently, they would turn that against me. For these men are false apostles, their work is not honest, they transform themselves indeed into apostles of the Christ. But remember that Satan himself can appear as an angel of light, and his servants, be sure, will do the same; if they can remain hidden, they will be in the guise of servants of this new perfection. Beware of them, and listen to my defence. Not one of them can say that any of the grounds I have for your confidence and trust is false or untrue. My boasting none can refute, no one in Achaia can gainsay it. Call me then foolish, if I boast, but hear me for once whilst I enumerate my own deeds in the apostleship and like them boast of my extreme spirituality and the privileges and powers conferred on me by God. I speak as a fool, and not according to the Lord. Yet hear me. Gentleness and forbearance, recollect, are a mark of your profession. And therefore you are gentle, you do not retaliate, when men make prisoners of you, when they make you feed and support them, when they take every advantage of you, and even are openly insolent

*The reason
why he
preached
without
pay*

*He boasts
in self-
defence*

and overbearing towards you. If they have done this, the dishonour is mine too, if I have been weak in my behaviour. But I will be 'weak' no longer. If others boast, I will boast too. And if others are bold, then I will outface them, and override them, and meet them on their own ground — yet in all this not as a wise man, but as a fool. Yes, I allow it, as a fool, therefore imitate me not, but continue in your habitual forbearance towards the foolishness of the world, whilst I display my own error by grappling with these traitors on their own ground. Are they Israelites? So am I! Are they genuine Hebrews? So am I! Are they Abraham's true and chosen seed? So am I! And are they servants of the Christ? I too am his servant in a more abundant and unquestionable manner. And as to

*He boasts
that his
martyrdom
exceeds
theirs*

those remarkable evidences they show of all the persecutions and cruelties they have endured according to the scriptures in the service of the suffering Messiah, I too bring forward the catalogue of my afflictions, and boldly claim a more excessive degree of martyrdom than they, more labours than they (I speak as a fool), more imprisonments, more blows, more hair-breadth escapes than they. Have I not been five times scourged by the Jews? That is more often than any of them. Have I not been thrice scourged by the Romans? Yes, and I have been stoned once, shipwrecked thrice, passed twenty-four hours in the open sea at the mercy of the waves. I have journeyed far afield, and the dangers I might enumerate would far out-distance the adventures they have suffered. In the field or the city, by land or by sea, by river or in the haunts of brigands I have run countless risks, and at the hands of my own

nation, or amongst foreign nations and cities, at the hands of false brethren too and traitors, I have passed through grave trials. Oh I have been an apostle above measure! What signs of martyrdom and crucifixion that they produce can I not parallel from my own experience, and indeed outmatch and vanquish altogether — in watchings, hunger, thirst, fasting, cold and nakedness; not to mention this daily anxiety for all the churches. For where they are weak, I too become weak; and where traps and pitfalls, snares and stumbling-blocks are placed in their way, so unquestionably I myself, Paul, must burn with indignation and shame. Let me boast in that, let me cry myself up on the score of that weakness alone! Before God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore, I do not lie. At Damascus they let me down from the city wall in a basket when the Governor was clamouring for my arrest and capture, and so the tale of my adventures continues. I will boast if they boast. It seems that I must say something to my own credit, something to offset their own credentials, and magnify my own office and person as a spiritual leader.

XII

I. AND so I come now to the visions and revelations vouchsafed to me, which have been numerous and impressive. I speak as a fool. There exists a man in Christ — and whether this man were in the body or not, I will not take upon me to speculate, but leave such matters in the hands of God — but as to this man who lives in Christ,

*He boasts
the great-
ness of his
revelation*

I will say that on a certain date now fourteen years ago he was caught up to the third heaven. This is not a seemly form of boasting, my brethren, but it appears that one must do it to retain one's character as a messenger of the Spirit. On another occasion this same man whose being is in the Christ — and again whether in the flesh or no I will not speculate but leave the matter to the All-knowing — such a man was caught up into Paradise, and heard words spoken which cannot be uttered by human lips and which it is sacrilegious to disclose. Of that man, as he is in Christ, I will boast, but of myself I will not boast, except to show the weakness of this same self. For the greatness of these revelations has been indeed beyond measure wonderful, and were I to boast of them, I should speak no longer as a fool, but as wise — but as true, for the revelation was truth. But I forbear, for experience teaches me that on account of these revelations men look curiously upon me, as something more than I seem, as other than my words and appearance show me to be, and therefore I am slow to speak of them, for the vastness of this revelation has little to do with this outward man, myself, whom the world knows, but with the spiritual man who dwells in Christ. Hence to haunt this carnal man, and for ever to check his boasting and self-sufficiency came an angel of Satan, one of his servants and messengers, to dog my steps, and

The harass me continually. Therefore I once
persecuting three times cried out to God that this
'thorn' persecuting thorn might leave me, and He
 said: 'Sufficient is my grace for thee, for power is most perfectly manifested in weakness.' Out of that weakness then looms the great power of the Christ. The

almightiness of it overshadows me, clothes me, and makes me able to boast that very weakness of the flesh as nothing, nay, as the instrument of God's glory. Then come — weakness, insult, persecution, difficulty and distress! For the Christ's sake they are even welcome to me. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

II. ALL THIS has been the speech of a fool — but of one who has been driven to it because of your failure to defend him before his enemies. You know yourselves that whatever claims to apostleship may be put forward and enlarged upon by others, my own are more striking than any; and even in your very midst — although they say I am nothing when present and only weighty by letters from afar — even in your midst have come to pass those signs of God, those wonders and evidences of His power, which were wrought in patience and meekness. You were not less favoured than other churches, and the 'signs following' were as numerous when I uttered the gospel message to you as they were when I preached and sojourned amongst the other churches. In only one respect did I treat you differently from the other churches, and that was that I never lived at your charges, but paid my own way, earning my own living, as I have not always done in Asia and elsewhere. Was this a crime, my friends? Forgive me, if it were. But I intend, so far as I am able, never to be at your charges, but to support myself again and draw no salary from you, on this the third occasion on which I am coming to you. For I intend shortly to be with you again for the third time,

*Paul's
desire to
spend and
be spent
for them*

and shall ask nothing from you. I seek not yours, but you; the father should work for his children, and support them, not be supported by them. I shall spend myself, and be spent for you, and in so doing, will you love me less? Because I will take no money from you, will you think the less of me for that? Is it possible that you think I maintained this attitude in order to take you captive, and did it all craftily and hypocritically, in order to spoil you in the end? But have I ever taken advantage of you? Have any of those I have since sent to you done you any wrong? Has Titus? Has the brother who went with him? Have we not all walked in the same spirit — in the same footsteps?

No doubt you have long been thinking that I am putting forward a defence of myself, of my authority and conduct, but it is more than that. I speak in the Christ and as in the presence of God, and I speak that my words may build you up, and not cast you down. For I fear lest coming to you I find you not as I should wish. I fear lest you find me a different one from such as you desire. I fear lest in your midst there be revealed the spirit of envy, of rivalry, strife and jealousy, calumny, slander, pride and insubordination — so that when I come to the church of Corinth I be there humbled, and cause great heart-searching and remorse to many of those who sinned before and have not yet repented of their disgraceful sins, their fornication and uncleanness.

XIII

I. NOW that I am coming to you for the third time, 'at the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every matter be established.' I tell you beforehand, and although still absent, I tell you as plainly as I would have told you had I come that second time, as I at first intended but spared you — I tell those who then sinned and the others as well that I will not again spare you. You seek, it seems, some proof and ground in me for the presence of the spiritual Christ and his word. He indeed is mighty towards you, and not weak. Though I be weak, yet is he not weak, but is mighty in your midst. For though he were crucified in weakness, yet in the might and power of God he lives, and though I have been weak in his weakness, yet shall I too live with him in the might of God, and show forth that might to you. Therefore, O my brethren, see to it whether ye be in the faith or no! Examine yourselves on that point, and be thoroughly persuaded in your own minds that Jesus Christ is in you. Or else beware lest your discipleship be found at last unproved, empty, hollow. I believe that you all know that my own discipleship has not been of that kind, that you all will know it shortly when I come to you with deeds, not words. Yet I pray God that I may do nothing harsh to any of you, but that you yourselves may do what is good, and I continue, if necessary, to incur the charge of being without any proofs of my apostleship. For all that I do, I can but do because it is the truth, and the action of truth. If it were not, we should have

*The test
of true
disciple-
ship*

no power. Therefore so long as you are healthy and sound, so long as your perfection approaches, and your power stands, I care not, Corinthians, if I be weak, if I be considered reprobate. Therefore I write this beforehand, that you may take action yourselves before I come, that I may not need to use a cutting and a cleaving sword towards those wrongs when I come, but may use the authority which the Lord has given me, for building up, and not for pulling down.

Farewell, brethren, work for your perfection, be of a good courage, have one mind amongst you, be at peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Greet one another with a kiss of peace. All the saints greet you.

The grace which comes on each several one of you from the Christ, and the infinite love of God which embraces all, and the fellowship of the holy Spirit be with you.

benevolent purpose, foreseen and foreordained in the Christ, which the gathering up and unfolding of the ages was to effect, even the subjection of all things to the Christ, the making of him as the sum and head of all as his consequent effect, a purpose to be carried out on earth as in heaven. Yes, the inheritance which we have now obtained is part of that consummating purpose, is in him, in whom we were first seen and known as the objects of this infinite purpose which subdues all things, destined to adorn his glory as we even now hope and expect by faith to do. We have learned to know the Christ, in whom you too have embraced the word of truth, which is the good news of our salvation, in whom you have attained faith, and have been given that stamp and evidence of the genuineness and certainty of your hope and faith, namely, the gift of the spirit which was promised, the seal of the title-deed conferring the rich inheritance. It is our own now and secure, a possession that is purchased and made our own, as part of the adornment and wonder of His glory.

Since I learned that this faith is now ruling in your midst, and that your love is now extended in the faith towards other churches, you have daily been the subject of my prayers and thanksgivings, and this prayer is one for further light and increased understanding on your part, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, father of all glory, may give you the spiritual wisdom and revelation, which are found in the clear full knowledge of Him, and illuminate your inner vision, the eyes of your heart, thereby explaining and opening to you the full nature of his calling and its aim and expectation, re-

*Paul's
prayer for
their
enlighten-
ment*

vealing too what an abundance of glory is implied in this 'inheritance of the saints' (Deut. xxxiii. 3), and unfolding to your apprehension the extraordinary power which reacts from him upon all who believe. It is the enormous overmastering supremacy which the Christ showed forth, which operated in him, raising him from the dead. This power established the Christ 'at his right hand' (Ps. cx. 1) in spiritual spheres supreme in every way, untouched, unimpeded by the innumerable authorities, influences, powers, potentates of the world, having power over all other names to which authority is lent not only in this age, but in the next. God has 'put all things under his feet' (Ps. viii. 6), made him the head of all things for the Church, which thereby is constituted as the body of the Christ, that is to say, the full complete manifestation, the allness of that one who now is fulfilling Himself everywhere and becoming all-in-all.

II

1. YOU, however, were deprived of life, involved in transgressions and contradiction of His law, in sins and errors, living merely as members of an *Their* age, a universe not under God, but under a *former* power working invisibly in the air as ruler of *darkness* the world by means of a spirit, a leaven that handles the minds and souls of those who exist in disobedience. In this condition which you shared with the rest of the blind world, a condition to which are attached all the desires of the flesh, motions of the will, and of thoughts, belonging not to the children of God, but to the children of the wrath of God, denizens of a misbegotten

state — in such a condition the charity and kindness of God which abound beyond all measure, making continual proof of the compassion and mercy that flow from Him, saved you and me from this death, this subjection to sin. The Christ who reigns so gloriously above all that is averse from him, he gave us life — for giving is his law, and by a gift we live. God raised us out of it all with Christ, and He sat us down on the right hand of power with Him and gave us dominion, thus to show in the ages to come the infinite preponderance of love and goodness over all else, revealed in His kindness and the grace and favour conferred on us in Christ Jesus. Always realise with gratitude that only through God's giving and through faith we reach salvation, not from ourselves, not through any works of our own, not for anything about which it is possible for us to take credit to ourselves. We are ourselves the work of God, so constituted in Christ Jesus to perform works prepared beforehand, made to walk in them, and to do them as the end of our being for which we exist.

II. YOUR condition as Gentiles was a condition of dependence on the flesh — in that character you were designated as uncircumcised by those tribes of Israel calling themselves the circumcision in allusion to the physical rite so called. Gentiles you were in every sense of the word, untouched by the Christ, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, without any part or share in the inheritance promised to others and secured to them or their heirs by document and covenant. You had no share in all that, you had no hope, no God. But now, not in the world where thus unfriended

*Christ has
cancelled
all that
alienates
from him*

condition was your lot, but in Christ Jesus you that were 'far off' have become 'near' (Is. lvii. 19) and the blood of the Christ accomplished it. For that 'peace' of which the prophet speaks is Christ; he has made one where there were two before, he has removed the barrier, he has abolished the hate, cancelled the laws, commandments and decrees supporting the old caste, and all this he did in his own flesh that in himself he might make those two contraries one, and make out of that old discord one new man, making 'a peace,' making a reconciliation of the two in a body reconciled to God. And where did he do all this but on the cross where the hate was nailed and slain? And so he came, when the reconciliation was made, and preached peace, 'peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near' (Is. lvii. 19). Thus through him is the way of approach for both of us in one Spirit, that way which approaches the eternal Father.

Your condition then is no longer one of alienation, strangeness, subjection. You have received the citizenship of the saints, you are members of a household, the house of God; you are, as it were, stones in a temple built up on a foundation of apostles and prophets, the chief 'corner-stone' of which is Christ Jesus, on which stone the whole building rises, and each block is fitted into its place, until a temple to the Lord be framed, a holy building wherein as the spiritual habitation of God you yourselves find your place and nature with all the rest.

III

1. NOW I, Paul, am in bonds, the prisoner of the Christ, not of men, imprisoned for the sake of you, the Gentiles. I have once formerly written on this subject, and you have heard of it. I have explained the grace which God imparted peculiarly to me for your benefit, and the revelation made known to me about you. You have but to read what I then wrote to perceive my initiation into and my understanding of this infinite mystery of the Christ, not known to previous generations of men, but in this age spiritually revealed to his holy apostles and prophets. And what is this revelation? It is the absolute unity and fellowship, communion and joint inheritance of the Gentiles in the divine promises, which promises they obtain through the gospel in Christ Jesus. This gospel I serve because God gave it me, because His grace and His power wrought so wondrously in me — though I was less than the least of all the saints, yet was this grace given me — and I was appointed and sent forth to declare to the Gentiles the utterly inexpressible bounty, wealth and goodness of the Christ. Light came on them through me, light bursting through the veil of mystery which had so long hidden all this away from the sight of men, hidden it in God as an unrevealed secret. But my gospel brought it to light, and makes it known now through the church of the Gentiles and Jews to all authorities and powers in the heavenly places, declaring the purpose which He had from the beginning, and that which He intended before all time, and His

*The
Gentiles to
inherit the
promise*

infinitely powerful and capable wisdom in ordaining these things in Christ Jesus our Lord, for it is in him that we speak so boldly and clearly, it is in him that we are ever drawing nearer to God with such perfect confidence and faith. Since this is my appointment and office, have no fear at my imprisonment and my troubles, they are for your sake, they are your glory.

14. KNOWING all this, the infinite Father is approached by me continually in prayer for you — that Father who is the only cause and substance of all that produces, that Father that bears a father's name in the spiritual as in the earthly realm, for there is no other fatherhood but His — to Him I make my prayer for you, for the strengthening of that man who is invisible within, for infinite power to be given you according to the wealth of His glory spiritually, for the Christ himself to inhabit your hearts by faith in love. I pray for those spiritual roots and foundations to be in you, whereby you are rendered capable of comprehending and embracing in one vision with all the saints the full dimensions of the Christ, his breadth, length, height and depth, and to understand the love of the Christ which goes far beyond all material comprehension, thus to reach that fullness and completeness reserved for you, and destined for you, as the fullness of God comes into view.

*The full
dimensions
of the
Christ*

Now to Him who is able to bring it all to pass by means and methods and in a measure utterly beyond our present power even to conceive or imagine — such is the eternal power now at work within us — to Him be glory in the church in Christ Jesus through all generations of men, and for ever and ever.

IV

1. WORTHILY then should you live — a life worthy so exalted a calling as this. In my bonds I call on you *Admonition* to remember it, and whilst your calling is so exalted, for that very reason to be humble and gentle, to be patient, not hard on one another, but to love. Peace is that bond which unites us in the unity of the one Spirit — see that this oneness is retained, one body, one spirit, and only one hope whereby we all were called — one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, the same being over all, through all and in all. That is our condition in the Christ, this absolute oneness, nevertheless severally to each individual is his own special grace allotted, and that grace is given to each one according to his individual measure of the Christ's gift. . . .

THE END